BUSINESS / B1

RP's tallest building at 66 stories to rise in Global City

ENTERTAINMENT / E1

Tourism student 'Pinoy Pop Superstar' champion

NEWS / A3

Arms, aid beat terrorists, Ebdane tells Singapore meet

SPORTS / A34

Cavs reach NBA finals for first time in franchise history

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, June 4, 2007 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 176 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Mindanao may win it for Zubiri, Recto–TU

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Christine O. Avendaño

FACING DEFEAT IN THE SENATORIAL RACE, the administration's Team Unity (TU) is pinning its hopes on less than two million votes from six provinces in Mindanao that have yet to be canvassed to push Miguel Zubiri and Ralph Recto into the Magic 12.

MINDANAO / A21

Shark fin won't help fight cancer, but ginseng will

CHICAGO—SHARK FIN soup might taste good. But it won't do much for cancer.

Shark cartilage, a widely used alternative therapy for cancer, did not help patients with lung cancer live longer, according to

SHARK FIN/ A4

Education crisis deepens

DepEd gets into heart of systems breakdown

By Fernando del Mundo

(First of three parts)

THE OFFICIAL FIGURES remain grim as some 20 million students troop back to classrooms today at the opening of the new school year.

Out of 10 students entering Grade 1, six will complete the elementary course, four will get through high school and two will enter college, according to the Department of Education.

"We do not know if the two who will enter college will get a degree or even a job," says Alice Alafriz Pañares, deputy director of the DepEd's National Educators Academy of the Philippines.

Problems bedeviling the Philippine education system had been festering for the past three decades before officials agreed they had reached a critical stage. The analogy is made of a frog placed in a kettle of water that is put to a boil. The frog will not know it is dying until it is too late.

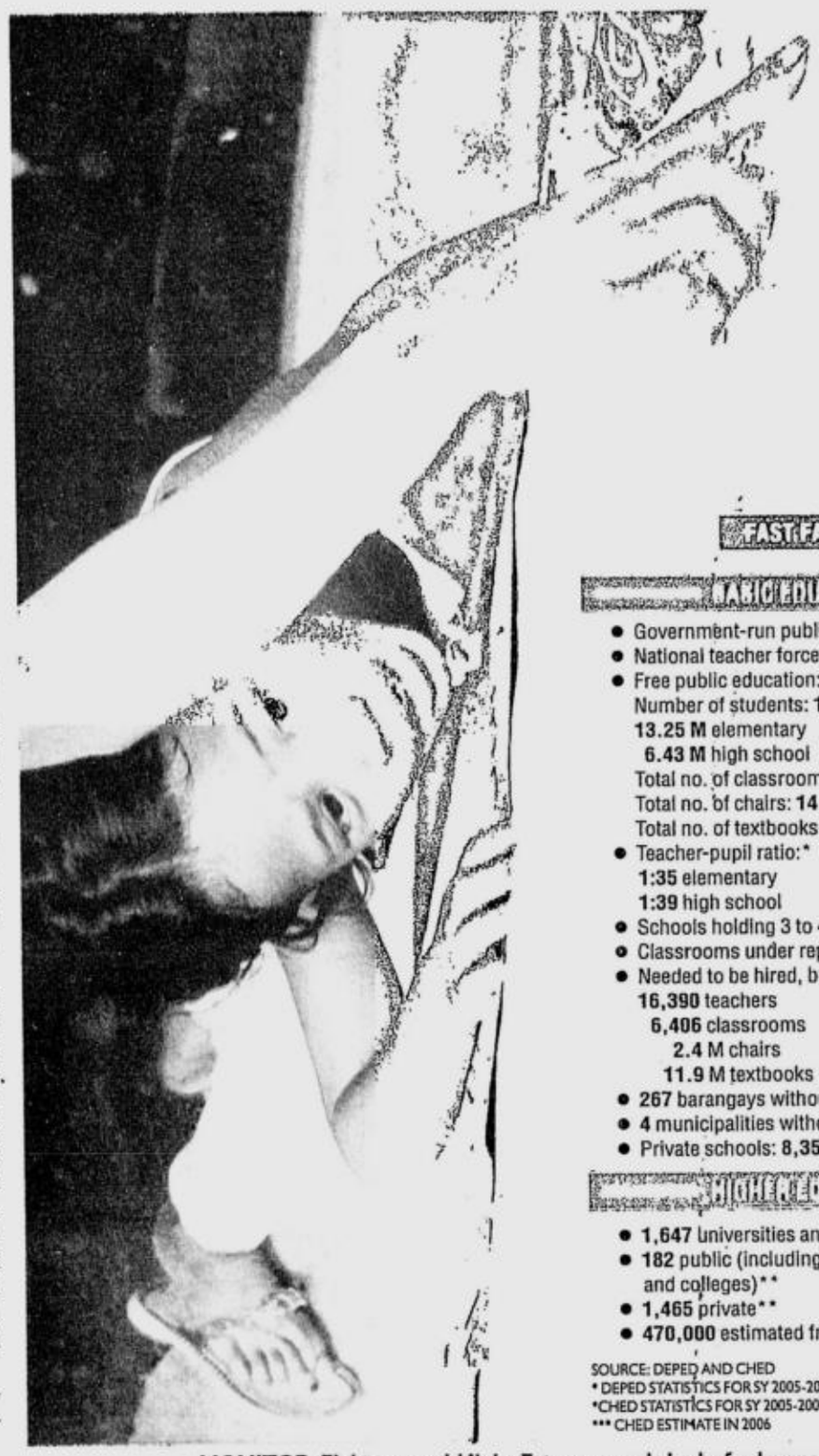
Experts both in and out of government say there are no quick fixes to the nation's education woes. A band-aid approach, which is essentially what's in place, will not do.

"The situation remains dismal," says former Education Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad. He says the tragedy is manifested in the very fundamental problems of access, a high dropout rate and a very low reading proficiency.

"Half of the country's student population is not even in school," he says.

Abad recalls a national test on reading given to about a million Grade 6 students in 2003. He says it showed that 99.4 percent of those who took the test were un-

EDUCATION/ A22



FAST FACTS

BASIC EDUCATION

- Government-run public schools: **42,722**
- National teacher force: **472,004**
- Free public education:
  Number of students: **19.68 M**
  13.25 M elementary
  6.43 M high school
  Total no. of classrooms: **417,789**
  Total no. of chairs: **14.92 M**
  Total no. of textbooks: **84.81 M**
- Teacher-pupil ratio:*
  1:35 elementary
  1:39 high school
- Schools holding 3 to 4 shifts: **133**
- Classrooms under repair: **13,348**
- Needed to be hired, built or acquired:
  16,390 teachers
  6,406 classrooms
  2.4 M chairs
  11.9 M textbooks
- **267** barangays without elem. school*
- **4** municipalities without high school*
- Private schools: **8,350**

HIGHER EDUCATION

- **1,647** universities and colleges**
- **182** public (including **111** state universities and colleges)**
- **1,465** private**
- **470,000** estimated freshmen***

SOURCE: DEPED AND CHED
* DEPED STATISTICS FOR SY 2005-2006
* CHED STATISTICS FOR SY 2005-2006
*** CHED ESTIMATE IN 2006

COMPILED BY CHONA GALANG, INQUIRER RESEARCH

MONITOR. Eight-year-old Jinky Estero eagerly looks for her name on the Grade 2 list at the Rosa Susano Elementary School in Novaliches, Quezon City. EDWIN BACASMAS

T-TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

Satellite TV beams hope

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE HEAVENS MAY YET PROvide the miracle to save Philippine education from its death throes.

It could come via satellite if schools are appropriately equipped with television receivers.

Knowledge Channel, using the facilities of ABS-CBN and Skycable, has been bringing to classrooms from Aparri to Zamboanga basic learning skills designed to improve the quality of education and level the learning and teaching fields.

Doris Nuval, Knowledge Channel's resource mobilization director, says that its founders—Rina Lopez-Bautista and Carlo Katigbak—thought of using the core competencies of the Lopez group, which runs one of the nation's major television networks, for the public good.

"With satellite broadcasting giant ABS-CBN and Skycable, the biggest cable distributor in the country, Ms Bautista and Mr. Katigbak created a foundation

SATELLITE/ A22

Plot to destroy JFK airport foiled; 3 held

NEW YORK—FEDERAL AUTHORities say they have broken up a suspected Muslim terrorist cell planning a "chilling" attack to destroy John F. Kennedy International Airport, kill thousands of people and trigger an economic catastrophe by blowing up a jet fuel artery that runs through populous residential neighborhoods.

Three men, including a former member of parliament in Guyana, were arrested and one was being sought in Trinidad as part of a plot that authorities said they had been tracking for more than a year and was foiled in the planning stages.

"The devastation that would be caused had this plot succeeded is just unthinkable," US Attorney Roslynn R. Mauskopf said at a news conference on Saturday, calling it "one of the most chilling plots imaginable."

In an indictment charging the four men, one of them is quoted as saying the foiled plot would "cause greater destruction than the Sept. 11 attacks," destroying the airport, killing several thousand people and destroying parts of New York's borough of Queens, where the line runs underground.

One of the suspects, Russell Defreitas, a US citizen native to the South American country of Guyana and a former JFK air cargo employee, said the airport named for the slain president was targeted because it was a symbol that would put "the whole country in mourning."

"It's like you can kill the man twice," said Defreitas, 63, who first hatched the plan more than a

PLOT/ A20

Nipped in the bud

Authorities charged four people Saturday with planning to set off explosives in a fuel line that feeds John F. Kennedy International Airport.

SOURCE: ESRI AP

Filipinos cheer as Pope names 4 new saints

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

ROME (VIA PLDT)—NOT ONE OF the Catholic Church's four new saints was from the Philippines, but Filipinos, led by President Macapagal-Arroyo and "miracle child" Risa Bondoc, trooped to St. Peter's Square and cheered for Marie Eugenie and the three others who were canonized yesterday in two-hour rain-drenched rites led by Pope Benedict XVI.

At the start of Mass on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Benedict declared as new saints Marie Eugenie Milleret (the French founder of the Religious of the Assumption), Giorgio Preca from Malta, Szymon z Lipnicy from Poland, and Karel van Sint Andries Houben from Ireland.

Their names were inscribed in the canon or list of saints recognized by the Catholic Church.

Some 40,000 people, who turned St. Peter's Square into a sea of umbrellas on a cold, rainy morning, cheered each time the Pope mentioned the names of the new saints.

The loudest cheers were given to Marie Eugenie by some 6,000 people representing the Religious of the Assumption order from around the world. Some 1,500 Filipinos were in this group.

FILIPINOS/ A12

Cebu produces graduates for IT firms

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

TALK TO COMPANIES AROUND the country and you will hear the same complaint: Colleges and universities are not producing enough of the type of graduates they need to take their organizations to the next level.

There is no problem about the quantity, but there definitely is something wrong with quality.

In Cebu City, however, complaints like these are becoming more and more faint, especially among the companies in the information and communications technology sector.

This is mainly due to the Cebu Educational Development Foundation for Information Technology (CEDF-IT), which has brought industry and academe together to hammer out, among other things, a curriculum designed to produce top quality graduates who can immediately land a job in the highly competitive ICT industry.

It was during the first Cebu IT Summit in 2001 that the seeds of the novel CEDF-IT partnership model were planted.

CEDF-IT executive director Bonifacio Belen told the INQUIRER that at the time, IT companies that had set up shop in Cebu were alarmed by the lack of qualified graduates to cover their requirements for programmers and other key IT personnel.

The colleges and universities, on the other hand, were worried about the difficulty of their gradu-

CEBU/ A22

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is welcomed by the Vatican's top foreign ministry official at the airport in Rome. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Australia now major player in RP security

By Amando Doronila

AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE landmark Status of Forces Agreement (Sofa) signed by the Philippines and Australia during the state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Canberra last week, Australian soldiers would be holding joint military exercises with their Filipino counterparts next year to enhance the latter's capacity to combat terrorist groups mainly in Mindanao.

Ms Arroyo said the Sofa was signed "at a time of uncertainty in the world," underscoring her attempt to convert foreign policy into an asset to compensate for the stunning domestic political rebuff she received in the 8-2-2 result in the Senate election in favor of the opposition.

ANALYSIS

Ms Arroyo conceded defeat, but not its magnitude, on the last day of the visit, in a speech at the Asia Society in Melbourne. She said the elections had "demonstrated our political stability." The "message of the elections was that the Philippine economy is stable and strong."

The Sofa will soon face its first challenge in the new opposition majority in the Senate when the agreement is submitted for ratification. This would trigger an early test of strength on a foreign policy issue in the next Congress.

The Sofa stands out as the highlight of Ms Arroyo's visit, but

AUSTRALIA/ A12

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2007

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(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Central Luzon and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Catapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/06/04/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Palace urges appeal of SC ruling freeing Ka Bel et al.

By Christine O. Avendaño and Leila B. Salaverria

MALACAÑANG IS BACKING THE MOVE TO APPEAL the Supreme Court decision that junked the government's rebellion case against labor Rep. Crispin Beltran and five other militant party-list lawmakers.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday that Malacañang respected and would fully abide by the Supreme Court ruling but supported the move of the Solicitor General to appeal it "because of its adverse effect on law enforcement."

"(I)t is well within the rights of the Solicitor General as the statutory counsel of the national government to file this Motion for Reconsideration," Bunye said in a statement.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters yesterday the decision to file a motion for reconsideration was reached Friday night during a security cluster meeting, and the consensus was approved by President Macapagal-Arroyo. He said he then directed Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera to file the appeal.

"Personally, I don't think the Supreme Court will reverse itself. I'm not optimistic considering who wrote the decision," Gonzalez said.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, who penned the decision ordering the dropping of rebellion charges against Beltran and the "Batasan 5"—party-list Representatives Satur Ocampo, Liza Maza, Joel Virador, Teodoro Casiño and Rafael Mariano—also wrote the decision late last year dismissing the bid for a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, which was described as a "grand deception."

Transparency International had earlier hailed the Supreme Court for not tolerating "executive encroachments on the judiciary." *(See related story at right.)*

In the government's motion for reconsideration, Devanadera argued that the Supreme Court decision had "far-reaching and adverse consequences on the criminal justice system."

She said the decision undermined the trial courts' and prosecutors' prerogative to determine probable cause against respondents.

"Nobody will be charged anymore, even if you find 1,000 graves in Leyte, there will be no case. Because then that will be the imagination of the DOJ," Gonzalez had said on Friday.

Gonzalez also said there was "nothing surprising" about the statement of Transparency International praising the high tribunal for its decisions that rebuked several of the administration's directives.

"Everytime something is done against the government, they praise it," he said.

"Why would I be surprised? They are just waiting for a chance to hit at the government. Everybody's looking for a chance to criticize the government, like the INQUIRER," he said.

In its decision, the high court had rebuked Gonzalez for prejudging the case and bringing politics into the justice system.

"We cannot emphasize too strongly that prosecutors should not allow, and should avoid, giving the impression that their noble office is being used or prostituted, wittingly or unwittingly, for political ends ... Only by strict adherence to the established procedure may the public's perception of the impartiality of the prosecutor be enhanced," the court said, quoting an earlier ruling on a graft case filed by Gonzalez against an opposition figure.

Meanwhile, despite the court's Friday ruling, 74-year-old Beltran still spent the weekend in detention at the Philippine Heart Center.

The Philippine National Police said yesterday it would release Beltran as soon as the lawyers of the detained solon showed them a release order from the courts.

Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), said Beltran's lawyers and supporters would go to the Makati City Regional Trial Court first thing Monday to secure the release order.

Beltran is expected to proceed in the afternoon to the Batasang Pambansa to attend the special four-day Congress session— after 15 months in detention.

Transparency Int'l got Supreme Court rulings all wrong, says Palace

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY DISputed Transparency International's report that the Supreme Court had rebuked the executive branch of the government when the high court struck down three controversial Palace measures.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser Gabriel Claudio said TI had a "wrong recollection" of the details of the Supreme Court rulings, pointing out the court did "not necessarily" repudiate the executive on these.

"The TI report makes an inaccurate, oversimplistic and unfair representation of the relationship between the executive branch and the Supreme Court," Claudio said.

On Saturday, TI hailed the Supreme Court for standing up against "executive encroachment on the judiciary" by striking down Executive Order No. 464, the calibrated preemptive response (CPR) policy and Proclamation No. 1017.

Claudio reiterated the Palace position that the high court actually upheld "significant aspects and portions" of EO 464, the CPR policy and Proclamation 1017.

"There is no pattern of executive encroachment on the judiciary or a pattern of judicial rebuke of the executive on such issues," he said.

Claudio said that looking at EO 464, the high court not only upheld the oversight powers of Congress but also upheld the executive's right to invoke executive privilege when Cabinet members are asked to attend congressional hearings.

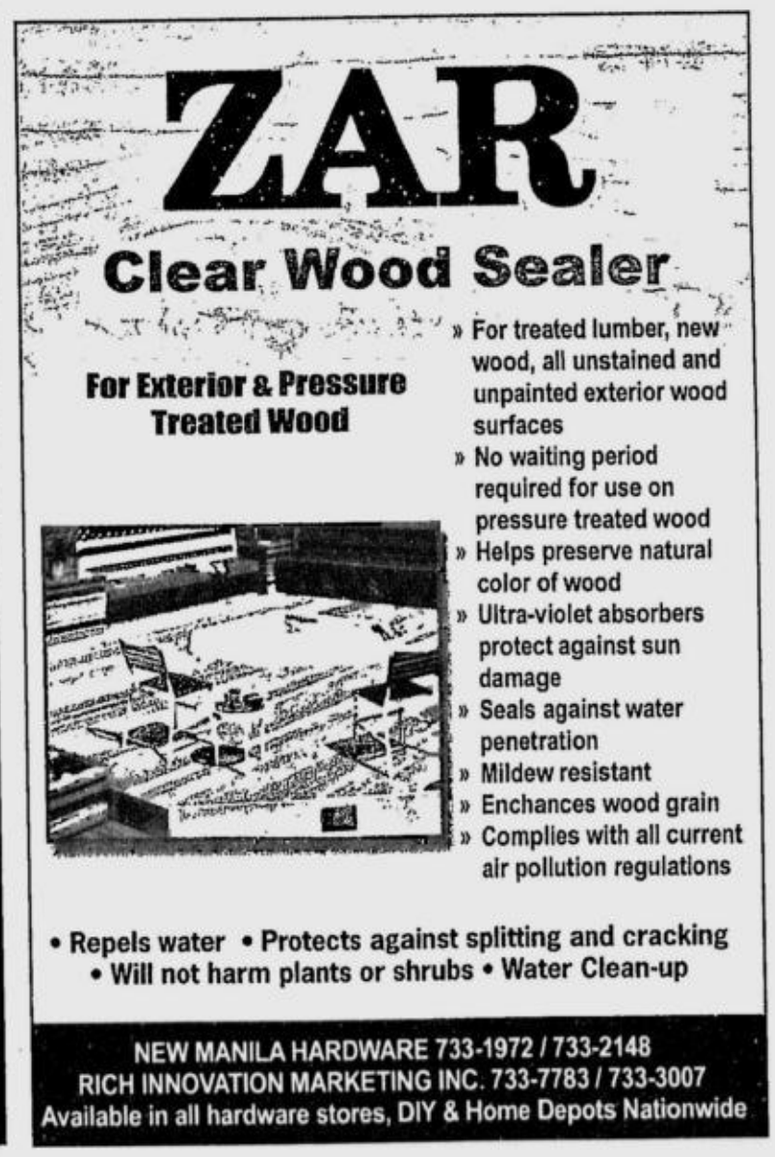
He noted that the high court "even provided the guidelines by which such privilege could be availed of."

To stress his point, Claudio said that because of this ruling, the government won the "Gudani case," referring to Marine Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani, one of the generals who was asked to testify in the "Hello Garci" scandal.

He said the high court ruled that "the rights of the members of the military to testify in congressional hearings are subject to the authority over them by their Commander in Chief."

On Proclamation 1017, Claudio said that while the SC upheld the right and duty of the President to defend the security and integrity of the State through the declaration of a state of emergency, it did censure some of the government's actions in implementing the same.

On CPR, Claudio said "the government hailed the decision of the SC because it reiterated the validity and importance of PD 880 which provides for the policy of maximum tolerance."



Arms, aid defeated terrorists—Ebdane

SINGAPORE—A COMBINATION OF MILITARY action and development projects is key to defeating the global threat from terrorism, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane said Sunday, citing the Philippines' experience against the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

Months of community dialogue, medical assistance and infrastructure projects on Jolo, where poverty and decades of government neglect had fed the rise of the Abu Sayyaf and a Muslim separatist rebellion, underpinned military operations that led to the killing of the group's top leaders, Ebdane said.

"The world witnessed the fall of the elusive leaders of the Abu Sayyaf group in several military encounters," Ebdane said in an address to the Shangri-La Dialogue, a meeting of regional defense chiefs in Singapore.

"What the world did not see were the operations that applied the combination of hard and soft approaches to addressing terrorism," he said.

Ebdane said development projects carried out parallel with military operations improved the level of trust between the government and local communities, constricting the once-unhampered operations of the Abu Sayyaf on Jolo.

"The critical task was to win the confidence of the people ravaged by conflict on Jolo. Sustained civil-military operations and humanitarian assistance projects were undertaken to address the roots of the conflict," Ebdane said.

Local communities provided troops with information on the whereabouts of the militants, leading to the killing and arrest of their top leaders, Ebdane said.

The military launched a major offensive last August on Jolo. It targeted leaders of the Abu Sayyaf and another group, Jemaah Islamiyah, who together have been blamed for attacks including a bomb blast on a ferry on Manila Bay in 2004 that killed 116 people.

Ebdane said the killing last year of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani during a gun battle with troops on Jolo had caught the world's attention.

Another top Abu Sayyaf leader, Abu Sulaiman, was killed by government troops earlier this year.

"It is this combination of developmental and military tools that led to the fall of the top leaders," Ebdane said.

In his speech, Ebdane did not mention the key role played by US forces in providing training and high-technology surveillance equipment to the Filipino troops.

Washington has funded roads, schools and other civic projects on Jolo, and the US military has helped train and arm underfunded Philippine forces and often flies P3 Orion spy planes to help track insurgents hiding in Jolo's jungles.

The battle setbacks have driven more than 300 Abu Sayyaf remnants, split into at least six factions, along with a few Indonesian terror suspects, deeper into the jungle.

Two of Southeast Asia's most wanted suspects, Indonesian nationals Dulmatin and Umar Patek, are believed to be in Mindanao where they are being sheltered by the Abu Sayyaf, officials have said.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon said in a paper presented at the conference on Saturday that the latest offensive against the Abu Sayyaf had "decapitated its command and control structure." It also cut the militant group's membership to 400 from an estimated 1,270 in 2000, said Esperon, who added that US military assistance was also important.

"The Armed Forces of the Philippines has now seized the initiative, denying the Abu Sayyaf group sanctuary and disrupting their recruitment, training and planning efforts," he said.

Because it has been "effectively weakened," the Abu Sayyaf was not able to launch attacks during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Cebu City in January, Esperon said. *AFP, AP*

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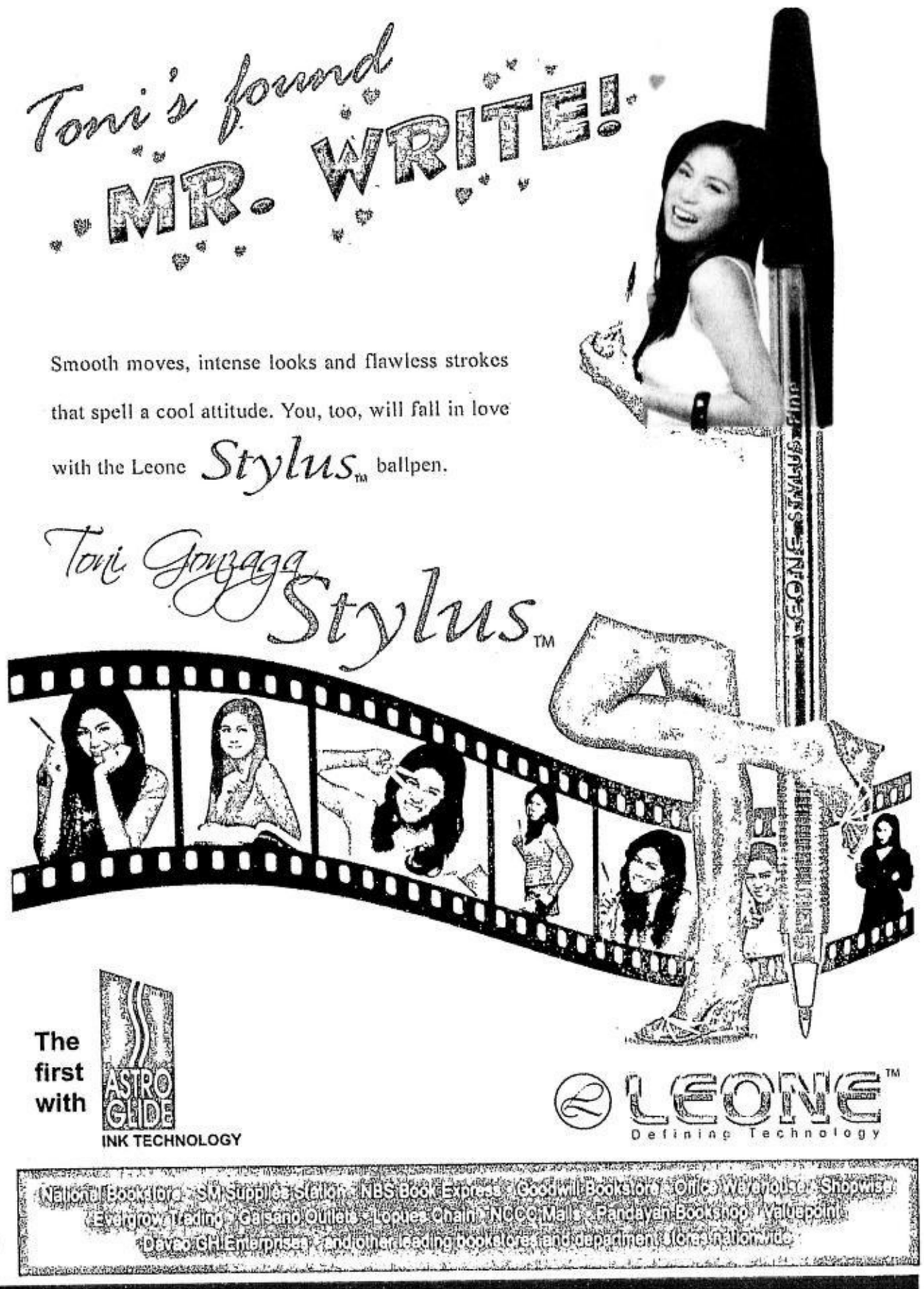

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'Asia sea security a must'

SINGAPORE—JAPAN AND CHINA are set to play a major role in the maritime security of Southeast Asia, and there is a "tremendous" need for the region to develop a strong military relationship with them, a top Indonesian official said Sunday.

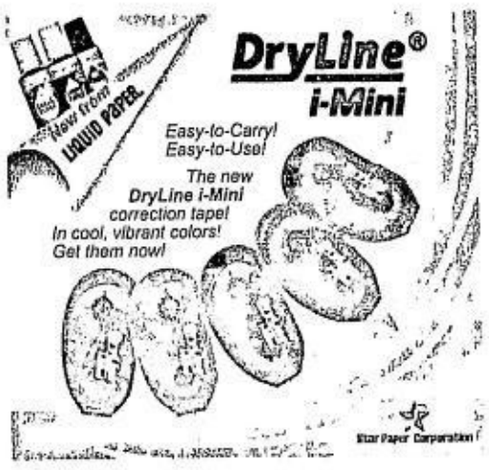
Defense Minister Juwono Sudarsono told a regional defense conference the United States remained the main security provider for the region, a transit point for ships carrying oil and other goods from the Middle East to Northeast Asia.

The ships pass through the key Malacca Straits through which about 30 percent of all global trade and half the world's oil is ferried. The countries straddling the straits—Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore—as well as the Philippines and Thailand have traditionally depended on the US to ensure their maritime security.

"But with the rise of Japan and China as economic powerhouses, there is a tremendous need to recognize that these two major countries will also want to codetermine" the security of the region, Sudarsono said.

Sudarsono noted that the economies of the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) were closely linked to those of China, Japan and South Korea.

Therefore, "there is a tremendous interest for us in Southeast Asia to link up and provide some degree of comfort level, a (military-to-military) relationship between the armed forces of the Southeast Asian countries and Northeast Asia," Sudarsono said. *AP*



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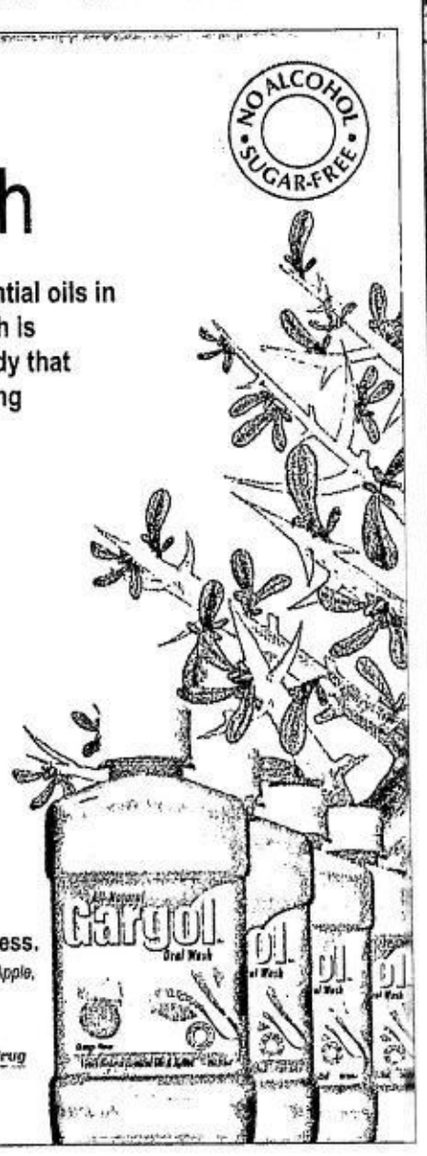

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Corrections

IN THE MAY 30 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Profiling of Muslim areas as fraud centers protested"—misstated the name and position of one of the Muslim leaders cited in the article. The Muslim leader's name is Mohammad Faried Sulaiman—not Muhammad Sulaiman. He is the undersecretary for madaris (Muslim schools) of the Department of Education in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao—not the head of the Ulama Congress of the Philippines.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 2 issue, the caption of a front-page photo misspelled the brand name of the flip-flops that President Macapagal-Arroyo was wearing during her visit to Divisoria. The correct spelling of the brand name is Havaianas—not Havianas.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Shark fin won't help fight cancer, but ginseng will

From page A1

the results of one of the first rigorous studies of the approach.

But two smaller studies showed some preliminary but encouraging evidence that two other complementary therapies—ginseng and flaxseed—might have some benefit for cancer patients.

US researchers reported that ginseng helped relieve the fatigue that cancer patients often feel while flaxseed slowed the growth of prostate tumors in men.

The studies were presented on Saturday here at the annual meeting of the American Society for Clinical Oncology, where the nation's cancer doctors usually discuss the latest in chemotherapy and new biotechnology drugs.

It is relatively unusual for this meeting to highlight alternative therapies, but doctors here said that might be changing. They acknowledge that many of their patients are taking these supplements—widely available in health food stores—and asking them about them.

So, they said, well-designed clinical trials are needed to determine whether these approaches are helpful or harmful.

The shark cartilage clinical trial was mandated by the US Congress and was sponsored by the National Cancer Institute. It tested a shark cartilage extract being developed as a drug by Aeterna Zentaris, a Canadian company.

The trial's lead investigator, Dr. Charles Lu of the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, said there was reason to believe the cartilage might work.

Cartilage has been found to contain factors that can impede the formation of blood vessels. And cutting off the blood supply to tumors has already been proven effective with other drugs.

But in the trial, those who received the shark cartilage extract lived a median of 14.4 months, meaning that half the patients had died by that point. Those who got a placebo had a median survival of 15.6 months.

More promising

Results were somewhat more promising, though far less definitive, for flaxseed—which is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and lignans, a fiber found on the seed coat.

That study, led by scientists at Duke University Medical Center, involved 161 men with prostate cancer who were scheduled to have their prostates removed. After the glands were removed about a month later, the tumors were studied.

It was found that the tumors of the men who had taken the flaxseed had been growing 30 percent to 40 percent more slowly than for those who did not.

The ginseng study suggested that the herb might help fight fatigue, which is common in people with cancer. The study involved 282 patients with various types of cancer.

About one quarter of the patients who took one of the two higher doses of powdered extract of ginseng root, either 1,000 or 2,000 milligrams a day, reported that their fatigue had become "moderately better" or "much better."

Americans spend between $36 billion and $47 billion a year on complementary and alternative therapies, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. *Reports from New York Times News Service and Reuters*

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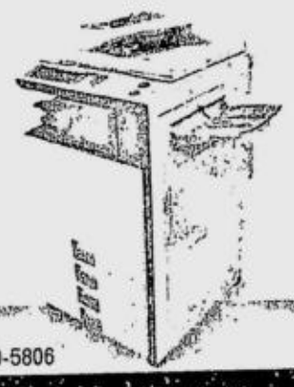

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DepEd integrates Muslim education in public schools

By Jerry E. Esplanada

YEARS, IF NOT DECADES, OF benign neglect have made tens of thousands of Muslim out-of-school youth (OSY) nationwide "likely targets for recruitment by both Islamic extremist groups and criminal elements," according to a report by the Department of Education.

But not anymore, asserted Education Secretary Jesli A. Lapus.

In an unprecedented move, the DepEd has come up with a special Alternative Learning System (ALS) program for Muslim OSY, a majority of whom belong to the poorest of the poor and what a Congress report called the "lowest percentage for simple literacy of population."

Muslim OSY are "the product of extreme poverty and the continuing armed conflict in Mindanao. Their problems are the most urgent," pointed out Education Undersecretary Manaros Boransing.

Boransing, a native of Lanao del Sur, said that "unlike in the past, they are now a major concern of the department."

In fact, Lapus has made the ALS program cum madrasah his "baby," Boransing told the INQUIRER. (Madrasah is the Arabic term for school.)

The program's main objectives are "to be able to positively contribute to the peace process between the government and our Muslim brothers and to improve the quality of their lives through education," said Boransing in a memo to Lapus, who approved the initiative on March 23.

According to Boransing, "The ALS program will first target Muslim OSY in urban areas because in five to 10 years, they may become part of the peace and order problem."

With a Congress-allocated budget of P100 million this year, the ambitious project will require at least P2 billion in the next four years.

The Libyan government has pledged at least P200 million worth of textbooks, to be supplied by local publishers.

The DepEd currently has 459 public schools nationwide implementing the Alive-Madrasah program, "excluding those in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao," which is supposedly autonomous, said Boransing.

AN URGENT APPEAL TO OUR POLITICAL LEADERS:

HEED THE PUBLIC SENTIMENT BEHIND THE VOTES. UNITE. MOVE FORWARD.

The elections are over. The Filipino people have spoken through their votes. And their votes reflect their true sentiments. **The Consumer and Oil Price Watch congratulates the Filipino people for their participation, vigilance and outspokenness in crucial political issues that will affect our lives : from Charter Change, a unicameral system of government and finally the last elections.**

THE PEOPLES' SOVEREIGN WILL MUST BE ACCEPTED AND RESPECTED

The results of the elections reflect **the people's desire for a system of check and balance.** This now exists. The House of Representatives is controlled by the Administration while the Senate is controlled by the Opposition.

This balance will work for the greater good of the people and business since **measures such as the national budget, revenues and taxes that originate from the House of Representatives can now be analyzed, checked and refined by the Senate.**

TO OUR SENATORS-ELECT

Now more than ever, the country needs your statesmanship, and progressive and independent-mindedness.

COPW challenges our senators-elect to tackle urgent and important reform measures, especially those economic in nature, with intellectual integrity and non-partisan objectivity.

IT IS THE PEOPLE'S DESIRE THAT YOU FISCALIZE WITHOUT BEING OBSTRUCTIVE, LEGISLATE WITHOUT BEING DESTRUCTIVE.

TO THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES

The country is on the verge of an economic boom which can be accelerated given the right policy environment and reforms, both economic and electoral, a number of which will need Congressional action. **Foremost is for Congress to pass measures to allocate new funds to modernize the electoral system.**

COPW URGES CONGRESS TO PASS PUNITIVE MEASURES TO MAKE ELECTORAL FRAUD AKIN TO ECONOMIC SABOTAGE AND SHOULD WARRANT SIMILAR PUNISHMENT.

TO THE PRESIDENT

You have made economic reforms the hallmark of your presidency. And we are beginning to see the positive results of this advocacy.

We ask you to make electoral reforms another hallmark and challenge for the remainder of your term.

The trust and confidence of the Filipino people in our electoral process must be regained because this is a crucial key to national unity.

In this light, COPW asks the President to appoint more independent-minded, fair and honest people to the Comelec.

We further urge the President to push for automation in the voting, counting and canvassing of votes.

ECONOMIC AND ELECTORAL REFORMS ARE TWIN LEGACIES THAT THE PRESIDENT CAN LEAVE OUR PEOPLE EVEN AS WE LOOK TO THE 2010 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

THE PEOPLE HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DESIRES. THEY HAVE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY WILL CONTINUE TO BE VIGILANT.

COPW appeals to the House of Representatives, the Senate and the President to work with each other, not against each other. National unity need not be as elusive as it has been.

Let us all work together because unity begets progress and progress will uplift the lives of the Filipino people.

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ADV'T

Pump wins Gore nod

BACOLOD CITY—AN indigenous water pump perfected in Negros Occidental that can bring water up to remote hillside villages without the use of electricity has won a local foundation an international green energy award to be presented by former US Vice President Al Gore this month.

The Alternative Indigenous Development Foundation Inc. based in Barangay Mansilingan, Bacolod City, is one of 10 renewable energy pioneers from across the globe that qualified for the Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy and won 10,000 pounds each, said Aladino Moraca, AIDFI executive director.

Enhanced

AIDFI won for its specially designed ram pumps that run without need of fuel. Although ram pump technology that taps the power of flowing rivers was developed some 300 years ago, AIDFI enhanced the technology using cheap locally available materials like door hinges to vertically move water up 100 to 200 meters.

"Our installations have no operation cost, they work on a 24-hour basis, last long and parts replacement is cheap, said Aladino Moraca, AIDFI executive director. It has already brought potable water to 15,000 people in 68 remote hillside villages in the Philippines, and is being replicated in other parts of the world.

AIDFI will compete with nine groups from Bangladesh, China, Ghana, India, Laos, Nepal, Peru and Tanzania for five top awards that will earn each winner an additional 30,000 pounds.

Reminder

Gore, who will present the prizes at the Ashden Awards ceremony to be held at the Royal Geographical Society in London on June 21, had said the awards were "a powerful reminder that well-designed and managed local sustainable energy initiatives can tackle climate change, while meeting the needs of local communities."

"Tackling these issues simultaneously—in both rich and poor countries—is critical to addressing the twin planetary challenges of climate change and sustainable development," Gore said.

AIDFI hopes to use its prize money to replicate its award-winning ram pump technology in Laos, Indonesia and Thailand, Moraca said.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

CA upholds deal on PNCC debt

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS UPHELD THE P6-billion compromise agreement forged between the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp. and Radstock Securities Ltd. to settle PNCC's debt.

In a May 31 decision, the appellate court dismissed the bid of Strategic Alliance Development Corp. (Stradec) and Rodolfo Cuenca to block the PNCC-Radstock agreement.

The court said that once a compromise agreement was approved by the appellate court, the agreement became final and executory.

The agreement was forged to settle the 26-year-old loan guaranteed by PNCC's predecessor, the Construction Development Corp. of the Philippines, to Marubeni Corp. of Japan. CDCP was headed by Cuenca when it transacted the loan.

In 2000, Marubeni sold its collectibles to the British Virgin Island-based Radstock after failing to collect payment on the loan from PNCC.

"Nothing is more settled in law than that once a judgment attains finality it hereby becomes immutable and unalterable," the court said.

Under the agreement, the PNCC will pay part of its obligation to Radstock with prime properties. The PNCC will also transfer to Radstock its 6-percent share in the gross toll revenues of the Manila North Tollways Corp.

In a statement, Radstock director Carlos Dominguez welcomed the ruling of the appellate court, saying it put an end to a long legal battle.

"To pay P6 billion for a P17 billion debt is very reasonable any way you look at it," Dominguez said.

But Radstock spokesperson Joan Orendain said the agreement did not end Radstock's problems.

She said several land parcels included in the compromise agreement were subject to negotiations among several corporate entities. The expressway venture also faces a court case.

"What this is is a major first step and it will go a long way to helping PNCC clear up its balance sheet," Orendain said. *Leila B. Salaverria*

2 customs officials face graft charges

TWO BUREAU OF CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AT the Ninoy Aquino International Airport—Alfredo Cruz and Rizalino Calderon, both of the Public Assistance Unit—have been named respondents in a graft complaint filed in the Office of the Ombudsman.

The two officials were also charged with violation of the Tariff Code, gross misconduct, and violation of office rules and regulations.

According to complainant George Sambre, Cruz and Calderon tried to bribe other customs officials in connection with a questionable shipment on March 30.

The shipment contained laptop computers—not portable electric lamps as declared.

Deputy Customs Commissioner Celso P. Templo upheld the Intelligence and Enforcement Group's recommendation for the filing of charges against Cruz and Calderon.

Sambre said he filed the complaint even if it lacked the endorsement of Customs Commissioner Napoleon L. Morales.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, June 4, 2007
9th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Tb 1:3, 2:1-8
Gospel: Mark 12:1-12

Using parables, Jesus went on to say, "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the wine press and built a watch tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenants and went abroad.

"In due time he sent a servant to receive from the tenants his share of the fruit. But they seized the servant, struck him and sent him back empty-handed. Again the man sent another servant. They also struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. He sent another and they killed him. In the same way they treated many others; some they struck and others they killed. One was still left, his beloved son. And so, last of all, he sent him to the tenants, for he said: 'They will respect my son.'

"But those tenants said to one another: 'This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let's kill him and the property will be ours.' So they seized him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

And Jesus added, "Have you not read this text of the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone. This was the Lord's doing; and we marvel at it."

They wanted to arrest him for they realized that Jesus meant this parable for them, but they were afraid of the crowd. So they left him and went away.

Commentary

Tobit and his family lived as captives in Assyria and the book is interested in preserving the essentials of Jewish family life, values, and faith even as they are exiled. Tobit wishes to share his feast at Pentecost with the poor. But he returns with the news of a murder. Tobit brings the body home, then washes and buries it—the highest corporal work of mercy for the Jewish people. He is mocked by his neighbors who know that this is his lifestyle and that he has been persecuted for it before—but Tobit is a just and faithful Jew. How faithful are we, even in times when our lives go well and we do not know persecution or exile?

Jesus tells the story of a vineyard (Israel) that was tended and when the harvest came in, the tenants kept it for themselves, murdering all who were sent by the owner, including his own son, thinking they would get the vineyard for themselves. Do we give God what is due God—as a community, his people and Church? Jesus reminds the leaders of the justice of God and that God will vindicate those who are faithful and his own beloved Son.

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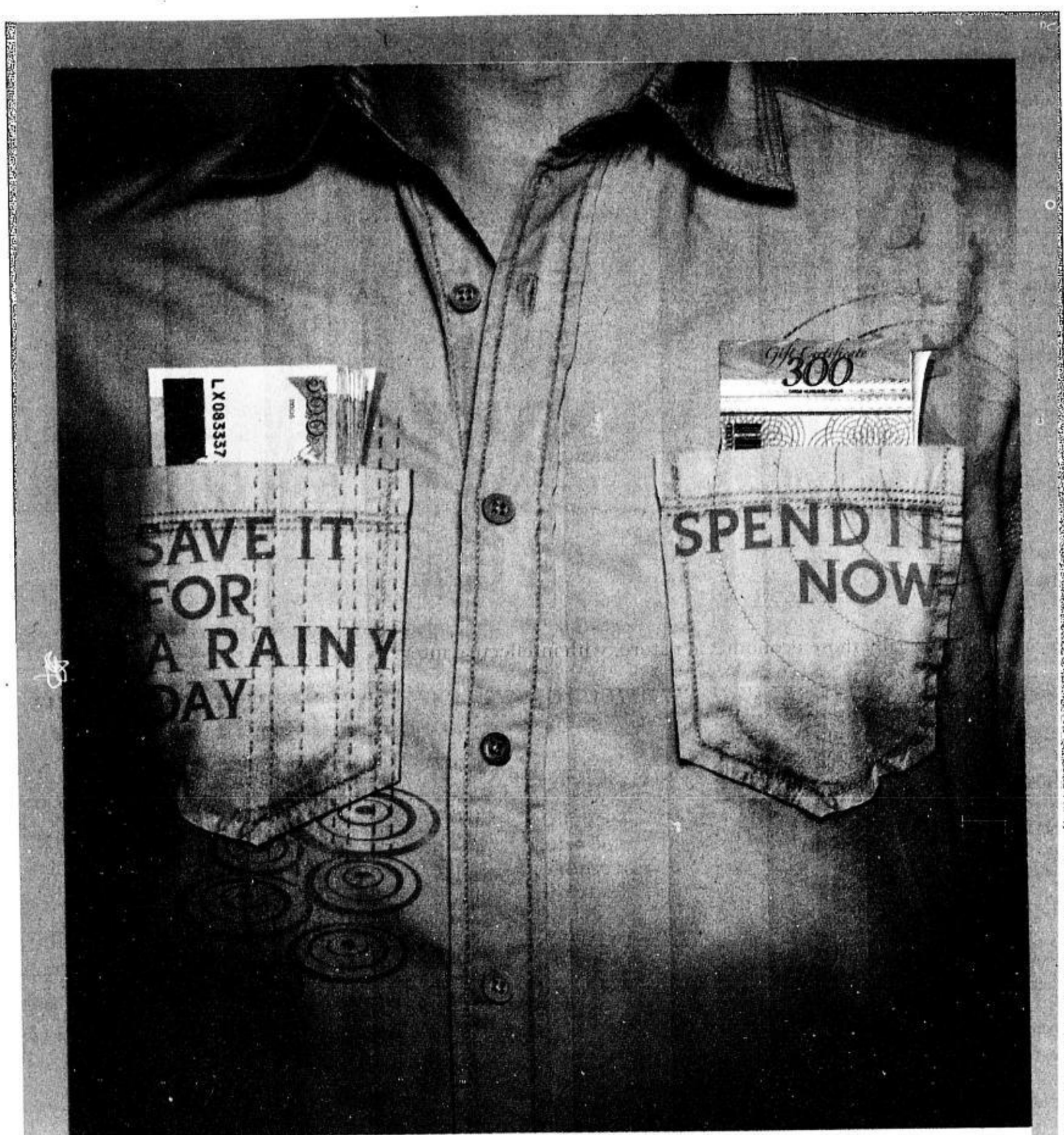

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PSBank, Metrobank Card Corporation Boost Metrobank Math Challenge

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Private sector efforts to help improve the quality of education got a much needed boost with the announcement of support from PSBank president Pascual Garcia and Metrobank Card Corporation president Anne Young for the annual conduct of the national Metrobank Math Challenge. The involvement of both PSBank and the Metrobank Card Corporation is a veritable expression of their commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility, and is expected to further enhance the level of competition by encouraging more students from more schools to participate.

The support of PSBank and Metrobank Card Corporation comes on the heels of growing interest in the role of math education in the wider concern to adequately prepare Pilipino schoolchildren for the challenges of global intellectual competition. Now on its tenth year of promoting greater interest in Math by providing a venue to hone the mathematical skills of the young in an atmosphere of friendly, albeit richly rewarding, competition, the Metrobank Math Challenge hopes to foster academic excellence by nurturing aptitude in mathematics, which is considered the queen of the sciences.

Metrobank Foundation president Aniceto Sobrepeña expressed his appreciation for the growing public interest in the mathematical aptitude of Filipino children. "Since 1997, when the Foundation forged a partnership with the Mathematics Teachers Association of the Philippines (MTAP) to scale up the competition, we have constantly strived to improve the program to help raise the standards of mathematical excellence among Filipino schoolchildren. With the support of companies like PSBank and Metrobank Card Corporation, and the continuing partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) and MTAP, we can count on the continued success of the Metrobank Math Challenge for many more years to come," he said.

Nearly four hundred thousand elementary and high school students from public and private schools nationwide joined the 2007 Metrobank Math Challenge. After hurdling stringent elimination rounds at the preliminary, regional and national levels, eighteen exemplary students were declared the country's top Math wizards. The Foundation awarded close to half a million pesos in cash prizes, plus trophies and medals, to the winning delegations and their coaches at an awards ceremony held recently at the Metrobank Plaza, where Department of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus was guest of honor.

The winners of the 2007 Metrobank Math Challenge with DepEd secretary Jesli Lapus, MBFI vice-chair Placido Mapa, Jr. and president Aniceto Sobrepeña.

The Metrobank Foundation is the corporate social responsibility arm of the Metrobank Group. Over the last 28 years, it has promoted a culture of excellence among Filipinos through its various programs, notably the Search for Outstanding Teachers, the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence, The Outstanding Philippine Soldiers, the Country's Outstanding Policemen in Service, The Outstanding Workers of the Republic, and the College Scholarship Program. The Foundation also has a grants program that assists social development programs of NGOs and government agencies in the fields of education, healthcare, and the arts. Metrobank Foundation celebrates Filipino excellence and presents wellsprings of hope in the future of our nation.

2007 METROBANK-MTAP-DEPED MATH CHALLENGE NATIONAL WINNERS

GRADE 6 INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

- **1st Place** CARMELA ANTOINETTE S. LAO
  St. Jude Catholic School, NCR
- **2nd Place** MATTHEW S. NG
  Chiang Kai Shek College, NCR
- **3rd Place** SARAH JANE T. CUA
  Pangasinan Universal Institute
  Region I

4TH YEAR INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

- **1st Place** DARREN MENDELL C. SY
  Chiang Kai Shek College, NCR
- **2nd Place** CHRISTINE W.S. CHEONG
  Zamboanga Chong Hua High School,
  Region IX
- **3rd Place** CHARLTON SEAN D. GAERLAN II
  Baguio City National High School, CAR

GRADE 6 TEAM COMPETITION

- **1st Place** MJ GUIEL J. NAVARRO
  RONALD ALLAN P. DELA CRUZ
  Jose Rizal Elementary School, NCR
- **2nd Place** KIRVEN DG. MOLAS
  TOPHER JOHN B. VIÑA
  Hen. Pio del Pilar Elementary
  School, NCR
- **3rd Place** CATHLYNA EDEN G. SAAVEDRA
  MAEDELIENE K. UY
  Zamboanga Chong Hua High School
  Region IX

4th YEAR TEAM COMPETITION

- **1st Place** PERCIVAL BYRON S. BUESER
  JONAS M. CURA
  Manila Science High School, NCR
- **2nd Place** GIL KENNETH F. SAN MIGUEL
  EUSELINN B. LUMABAN
  San Bartolome High School, NCR
- **3rd Place** JUDD ADONAI MARLEY C. LINGAN
  SAMANTHA ELAINE S. CASTILLO
  Cagayan National High School
  Region II

NATIONAL FINALISTS
INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

GRADE SIX

FRANCIS U. TAN
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Montessori, CAR

ADRIAN R. VIDAL
Juan Sumulong Elementary School, Region IV-A

JERWIN P. CRUDA
Calbayog City SPED Central School, Region VIII

KIM R. GERONIMO
Buug SPED Center, Region IX

FOURTH YEAR

BRILLIANT KING R. VERGARA
Muñoz National High School, Region III

MARK HARVY A. PITA
Laguna College, Region IV-A

ROY ROQUE T. RIVERA, JR.
Negros Occidental High School, Region VI

LUIS MIGUEL B. ALVAREZ
Dole Philippines High School, Region XII

JOSEPH CARLO M. CANDARE
Agusan National High School, Region XIII

JOHN CARLO A. DUEÑAS
San Bartolome High School, NCR

TEAM COMPETITION

GRADE SIX

SHARLAINE LOUISSE P. LIANG
ERIKA MAE P. GUILALAS
Christian Ecclesiastical School, Region III

VELADIE A. BALLESTEROS
JEAN PAULA M. ATIENZA
Canlubang Elementary School, Region IV-A

DIANNE A. VALENCIA
MARY FRANCE R. GONZAGA
Goa Central School, Region V

GELIAH ANNE D. BRILATA
REBECCA MAE M. MADRIAGA
Cassidy Elementary School, Region VIII

MOSES S. CAM
GERICO A. SY
Davao Christian High School, Region XI

KARLA MARIE S. EBOL
CARMELYNE SALVE R. CORPUZ
Dadiangas West Central Elementary School
Region XII

FOURTH YEAR

BRIAN KARLO W. ZUÑIGA
MA. CHRISTINA M. MACALINAO
Olongapo City National High School, Region III

ROY ROQUE T. RIVERA, JR.
J. KENNETH C. JALANDONI
Negros Occidental High School, Region VI

LESTER ERVIN F. LEGASPI
ARVEY LAURENCE D. ABAO
San Lorenzo Ruiz Academy of Polomolok
Region XII

METROBANK FOUNDATION

congratulates
the winners of the

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With nearly 400,000 participants from more than 20,000 public and private schools all over the country, this year's competition has again put math instruction in the forefront of our effort to help improve the quality of education as a whole.

To the winners, the lessons in discipline, hard work and team effort they learn in the course of the competition are just as important as the medals, trophies and cash awards. Aside from honing their mathematical skills, the rigors of training and participation actually help them prepare to become globally competitive professionals in the future.

As the nation embarks on the road to greater progress, the Metrobank Foundation together with PSBank and the Metrobank Card Corporation, in partnership with the Mathematics Teachers Association of the Philippines and the Department of Education, will continue to invest in the talent and potential of Filipino school children.

From left to right:
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Chiang Kai Shek College
Jonas M. Cura
Manila Science High School
Carmela Antoinette S. Lao
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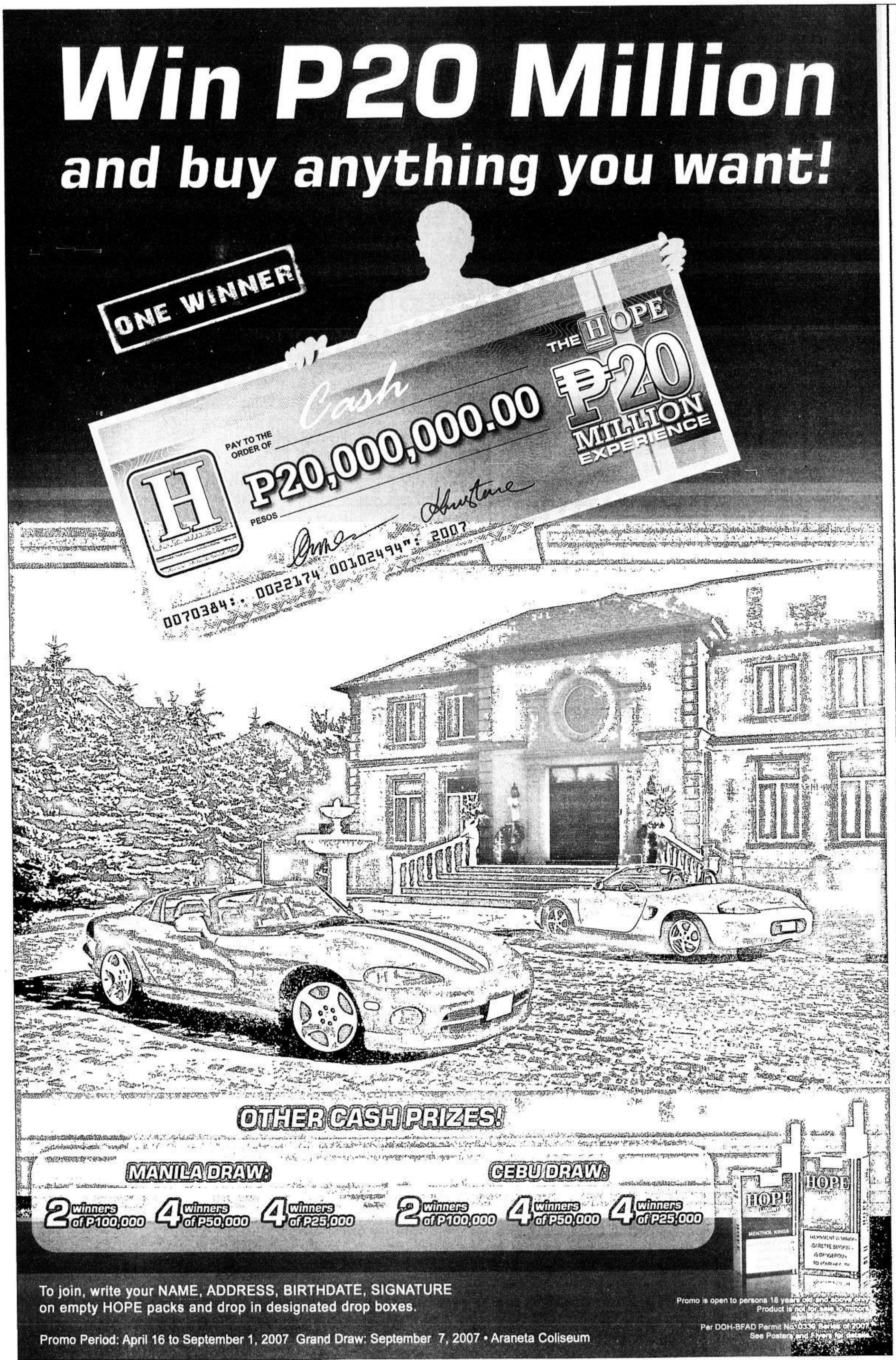

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'Sison still top Red'

THE MILITARY insists Jose Ma. Sison is still very much in charge of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which continues to wage an insurgency against the government.

Armed Forces of the Philippines information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said Sison, alias Armando Liwanag, continued to issue directives to the CPP-New People's Army and cited a directive he allegedly gave three years ago ordering the escalation of NPA offensives against the military.

"Those statements came from him," Bacarro said.

Sison, through his lawyer, had asked the European Union Council to remove his name from its terror list, saying he had removed himself from the communist movement 29 years ago when he became a political prisoner during the Marcos dictatorship.

"Probably this was done to protect himself, but basically the information that we have on the ground is that he (Sison) is still recognized as the top leader of the CPP-NPA," Bacarro said. *Christine O. Avendaño*

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Where the rich go when they need cash

It's not just the poor and middle class who run to Pawnshops.

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

Philippine Daily Inquirer October 23, 2006

THE POOR AND THE MIDDLE-CLASS are not the only ones patronizing pawnshops. The rich do, too.

Like their countrymen of lesser means, the rich sometimes need quick cash to tide them over until the next windfall and they believe going to a pawnshop is a cheaper and faster alternative to either selling land, withdrawing time deposits or taking out a loan.

The only difference is that the rich pawn high-value items, such as designer bags, signature Swiss watches, diamond rings of at least one carat, fashion jewelry and even home theater systems, in exchange for loans that run in the six figures.

And the affluent do not go to the friendly neighborhood pawnshop, with its requisite bars and heavy safe.

They instead to go to those that specialize in appraising and securing expensive items, such as Agencia de Empenos de Makati Inc., that look more like a fine jewelry store with its art pieces and deep lounge chairs where guests are treated to Lavazza coffee.

Agencia proprietor Mike Dizon tells SundayBiz in an interview that pawning high-value items is actually part of the lifestyle of the affluent in Southeast Asia, and is starting to pick up in the Philippines.

Contrary to popular belief, the rich do sometimes run out of cold cash.

"Most everyone will need cash sometimes, we make it easier and more comfortable for them," he says.

Dizon says the rich sometimes pawn their possessions for just a short while, from as short as a day to about a month, and the key to getting their items is to ensure that their items will be taken care of and that they get a good price for them.

For this reason, Dizon and his key staff go through training to properly appraise the value of these prized possessions.

Agencia is a member of the US National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors and trained with the Gemological Institute of America.

There are also appraisal experts of Swiss watches, jewelry and diamonds, high-ends Southeast Asian paintings and other collectibles like Murano vases from Italy to service discriminating clients that include chief executive officers, show biz talents, basketball players and society matrons.

To ensure the safety to these items, Agencia installed top-of-the-line fire proof safes and the latest in security equipment.

Among the venerated Swiss watches, Patek Philippe, Jaeger-le-Coultre and Vacheron Constantin brands command the highest appraisal and are among the most traded in the second hand market, based on his experience operating the Secondo second-hand shop in Glorietta 1, Ayala Center.

Other heavily traded brands include Cartier, Rolex, Breguet, Audemars Piguet, IWC, Officine Panerai, Franck Muller, Omega, A Lange & Sohne, Breitling, Zenith, Chopard and Piaget.

For the jewelry, it's Harry Winston, Bvlgary and Tiffany Co. brands that are the most popular and enjoy the highest resale value.

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Australia now major player in RP security

From page A1

it marks the entry of Australia as a major player in Philippine security arrangements, breaking the monopoly of the United States as the historic guarantor of the country's external security.

It paves the way for similar agreements with other countries, as the pact signals the opening of Philippine security to multilateral and bilateral defense arrangements.

While Philippine and Australian defense officials sought to assure the public that joint training exercises would not allow Australian troops to engage in combat operations against groups tagged as terrorist, such as the Abu Sayyaf, the agreement establishes the military presence of Australian forces on Philippine soil.

VFA

The pact is the second Sofa signed by the Philippines with a foreign government. The first was the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) it signed with the United States, to allow joint Philippine-US military exercises in the Philippines following the expulsion of the US military from its air base in Clark, Pampanga and naval base in Subic, Zambales, in 1991.

The Sofa with Australia allows Australian soldiers to train with Filipino troops and serves as the framework that governs the behavior of visiting forces during joint military exercises.

It raises the profile of Australian military presence in the Philippines already cooperating closely in the US-led war against extremist Islamic groups associated with Osama bin Laden.

The VFA has been rocked by controversial sovereignty issues over the criminal jurisdiction of Philippine courts and over the custody of American servicemen for offenses while taking part in the joint exercises.

Philippine officials travelling with Ms Arroyo were evasive over whether the Sofa with Australia would avoid the controversy stemming from the custody of US Marine Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith.

A Philippine court sentenced Smith to up to 40 years in prison in December 2006 for raping a young Filipino woman.

At the signing of the Sofa, Australian Prime Minister John Howard acknowledged "the efforts of the Philippines in combating and over time containing the terrorist threat within its [territory] and in the vicinity."

Gunboats

Australia put military muscle into the pact by donating 28 high-speed gunboats worth $4 million to patrol marshland areas in Mindanao, home to terrorist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah, a regional Islamist group linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida, and the Abu Sayyaf.

Ms Arroyo told Howard that Australia had become the closest partner of the Philippines in counterterrorist training, although Washington had disbursed $500 million in military aid to Philippine armed forces since 2000, mostly in the form of second-hand helicopters, patrol boats and trucks.

It was in 2000 that US troops returned to the Philippines for joint military exercises.

Soft and hard power

In an interview with the Australian newspaper, Ms Arroyo said: "Even before the Bali bombing (in 2006, which killed close to 100 Australian tourists), the Philippines was at the forefront of fighting terrorism in southern Philippines," and Australia "has been helping us as we develop" a new approach, "combining soft and hard power."

She said the Sofa "will help us to professionalize and modernize our armed forces ... so that we can help one another against terrorists."

Ms Arroyo, however, emphasized that the role of Australian forces would be limited: "The Sofa is for training and intelligence fusion, not for operations,

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Filipinos ch names 4 ne

From page A1

Filipinos have a special role in the sainthood of Marie Eugenie, whose order was dedicated to the education of young women.

The miracle that led to her canonization happened to Risa Bondoc, now 12. The child's brain malfunction was cured after her family and the Assumption sisters prayed for the intercession of Marie Eugenie and after the child was placed on top of her tomb in Paris.

Bondoc, wearing a white jacket over her white dress, handed to the Pope a financial donation from the Religious of the Assumption for a school for disadvantaged children in Africa.

Accompanied by her mother Carmen "Menchu" Bondoc and Sr. Diana Wateurs, superior of the Religious of the Assumption, Risa went up a second time to the Pope to receive communion from him.

Three presidents

The three leaders of the countries the three male saints came from were present at the canonization rites—President Mary McAleese of Ireland, President Edward Fenech Adami of Malta and President Lech Kaczynski of Poland.

While Marie Eugenie was from France, the French government was represented only by its cultural minister Christine Albanel.

As though to make up for the absence of the highest French leader, Ms Arroyo, an Assumption alumna and a devout Catholic, and Mexican First Lady Margarita Zavala, also an Assumption alumna, came for Marie Eugenie's canonization.

At the start of his homily, the Pope acknowledged Ms Arroyo first among the four heads of state present. Seated among hundreds of VIPs on the right side facing the imposing facade of St. Peter's Cathedral, Ms Arroyo held her own umbrella.

She was accompanied by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Philippine Ambassador to the Vatican Leonida Vera.

Assumption Alumna Association

Ma. Lourdes Herrera, president of the Assumption Alumna Association, said Ms Arroyo's presence was significant and brought pride to the Assumption community.

"We're all happy she's able to attend as a daughter of Marie Eugenie," Herrera said.

Explaining Ms Arroyo's presence, Vera said: "She's just attending it (canonization) as an alumna but of course she will be given a special place."

Ms Arroyo was seated with the three other heads of state in the front row of the VIP area.

Visit to Fatima

She is scheduled to have a private audience with the Pope today before proceeding to the Basilica of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal on a four-day trip described as a spiritual journey.

The elaborate and solemn rites on the steps of St. Peter's Cathedral began at 10 a.m. amid a downpour that went on for hours.

The Pope formally declared blessed the four new saints at the conclusion of the long process required for canonization. The Mass and the declaration of sainthood were in Latin.

"In honor of the Holy Trinity and with the authority that comes from the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostles Peter and Paul, after reflecting and praying for the help of the Lord and listening to the opinions of the brother bishops, I declare saints Giorgio, Szymon z Lipnicy, Karel van Saint An-

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not for boots on the ground."

Australian Defense Minister Brendan Nelson said the agreement did not give either country authority to deploy troops to conduct operations in each other's territory.

Criminal jurisdiction

Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., who signed the agreement with Nelson, tried to clarify the sensitive criminal jurisdiction aspect of the Sofa.

He said, unlike the VFA with the United States, the Sofa would submit Filipino and Australian soldiers to the criminal jurisdiction of both countries.

He said criminal jurisdiction would be "dependent on rules of the court of the receiving country."

Should an Australian soldier visiting the Philippines be convicted of a crime, the Australian government is bound to honor Philippine laws, Ebdane said.

"If he's convicted in a Philippine court, then he will have to serve his sentence" in the Philippines, the defense secretary said.

The Sofa and the donation of the gunboats heightened concerns of Australian human rights groups that the pact "might be used against those expressing their legitimate right to protest policies of the central government," warns the Canberra Times newspaper.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is welcomed by Australian Prime Minister John Howard during her visit to Canberra. AFP

eer as Pope w saints

dries Houben, and Marie Eugenie of Jesus Milleret as saints and they will be inscribed in the book of saints. And so the whole Church will honor and pray to them," the Pope said in Latin.

Huge tapestries

In his homily, the Pope spoke about the four new saints in their respective languages, and the respective delegations, waiving flags and banners of their saints, cheered. Huge tapestries featuring the images of the four new saints were hung from the ornate columns of the St. Peter's Cathedral.

During the canonization rites, four groups gave offerings to the Pope. Risa Bondoc made the offering for St. Marie Eugenie.

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints proposed as a miracle attributed to Marie Eugenie's intercession the case of Risa, a Filipino child born with a condition which prevented the two halves of her brain to join. This made her unable to talk, walk and normally develop.

In her own narrative, Risa's mother Carmen said her daughter was diagnosed with Septo Optic Dysplasia and was brought to the Children's Hospital in Boston for treatment. A year after she was born on Feb. 19, 1995, Risa was brought to Paris and was laid on top of the tomb of Marie Eugenie. Her family and the Assumption sisters consistently prayed for her intercession.

After 11 years, Risa's brain halves have not joined but she has since been able to walk, is now very talkative and even goes to school at the Assumption College in Makati. Experts were unable to explain this development scientifically and so the Congregation of the Causes of Saints proposed it as a miracle for Marie Eugenie's canonization.

The Pope approved the miracle on Dec. 16, 2006, 31 years after Marie Eugenie was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1975.

Another miracle kid

Another miracle child, a 6-year-old boy from Malta, was also present during the canonization. Eric Catania is the second miracle attributed to Preca, according to Steve Mallia, a journalist of The Times of Malta.

Catania was born with an acute liver problem and was told he needed a liver transplant. But he recovered completely without having any transplant in 2001 after a glove used in the exhumation of Preca's body was placed on his body, Mallia said.

Mallia said the first miracle attributed to Preca was the cure of a blind man who was able to see after Preca's shoelaces were placed under his pillow.

Catania, who was in white first communion attire, received his first communion from the Pope together with his father and mother and a younger sister.

Some 40 bishops and cardinals concelebrated the Mass with the Pope, and 200 priests administered communion to the people estimated by Vatican press officials at 40,000 to 50,000. Because of the rains, the Pope no longer went around the square to bless the throng as originally planned.

Among the Assumpion alumnae who attended the canonization rites were Speaker Jose de Venecia's wife, Gina, Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Chinit Rufino.

Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez, an alumna of Assumption Convent in Makati but who was unable to attend the ceremonies, is a member of the Philippine committee that worked for the canonization of Marie Eugenie.

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H2-3	Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou 4 - 6 Days	
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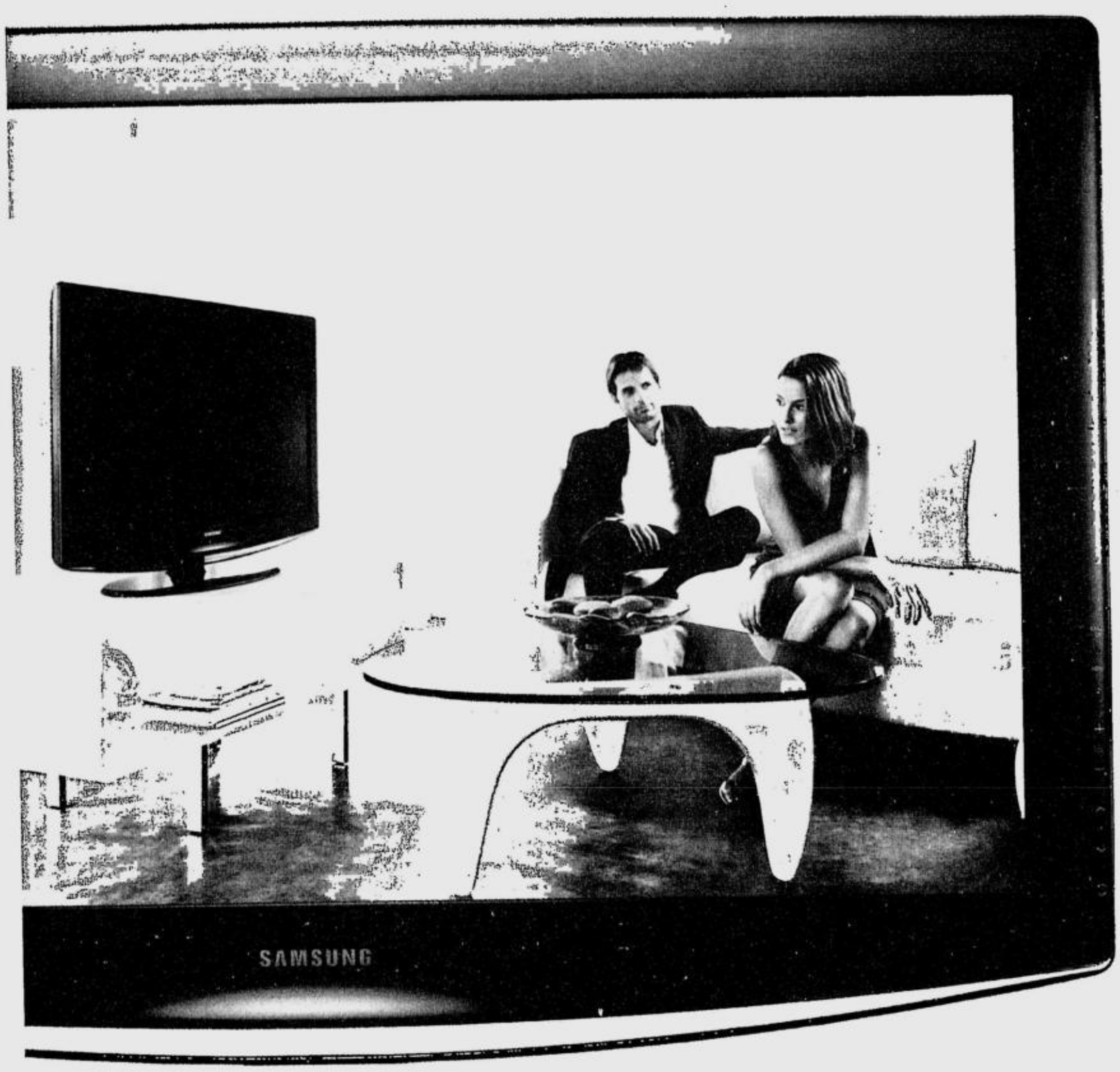

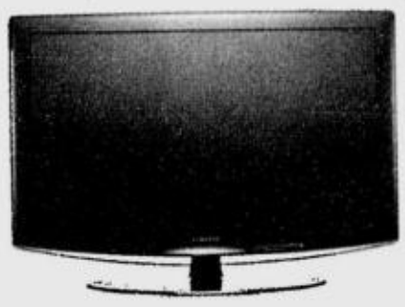

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Let's keep it real

EDITORIAL

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION HAS LAUNCHED an ambitious campaign to build a digital infrastructure that will offer disadvantaged students throughout the country an alternative learning platform. The P26-billion Cyber Education Project is audacious in scope; unfortunately, its very audacity may be used to disguise its flaws.

We hope the DepEd—and Malacañang, too, which gave the information and communications technology (ICT) project its sudden momentum—will pause to catch its breath, consider the many lessons of our recent history, and then (in ICT-speak) scale back the project.

We accept many of the project's premises, and sympathize with Education Secretary Jesli Lapus' desire to leave a legacy in digital education, but we cannot ignore those aspects of the project which worry us.

Certainly, if it works, and if it attracts the right kind of user, the proposed infrastructure will enable those without previous and reliable access to the Internet to continue or complete their education, perhaps at their own pace. The National Economic and Development Authority, in greenlighting the project, described its main benefit and identified its main beneficiaries in straightforward terms. "Many public schools and out-of-school youths and adults throughout the country can access live and interactive broadcast instruction using satellite-based technology. Users will also be able to get information and communication technology-based instructional packages through the Internet and a dedicated education network."

And certainly, if it works and if it attracts the right kind of user, the Cyber Education Project will dramatically modernize Philippine public school education. Neda again: "This e-education system will allow interactivity between and among the learners and teachers. It will allow the learners to deal with interesting and high quality lessons and to become well motivated and receptive to ideas presented through television and other multi-media instructions."

The project roll-out aims to include 23,549 public schools nationwide, plus 665 Alternative Learning System (ALS) Learning Centers.

Well, we did say it was ambitious; in fact, it was the sheer scale of the project that gave rise to our first misgivings. The government cannot afford an expensive failure; indeed, even if the project fails, the education department will be forced to continue "using" it, simply because inertia is the first law of any bureaucracy. Why start with such a wide base?

It appears that the project was much more modest originally: a P5-billion build-operate-transfer proposal the Neda approved in November last year. Why did it grow five times in projected cost in the six months between approval and President Macapagal-Arroyo's official visit to China in April?

On that visit, the Philippines signed five agreements with China, including a $465.5-million soft loan from Tsinghua Tongfang Nuctech to fund almost the entire Cyber Education Project. (The remaining cost, some P3.7 billion, will be shouldered by the Philippine government.)

Perhaps the availability of soft money quickened the pulse of planners from Malacañang, Neda and the DepEd. (Never mind that however soft the terms of the loan were, the money would still have to be repaid in the future, and by a government that passed up the advantages of a BOT project.)

Or perhaps the very people who were responsible for the recent overpricing scheme involving a regional office of the DepEd—P250,000 per computer!—had insinuated themselves into the project. That bidding never got off the ground, after embarrassed education officials worked hurriedly to put out the public relations fire. But the would-be scammers were never penalized either.

The provenance of the funding is also worrisome, because recent loans backed by the government of China have turned out to be controversy-ridden. The $330-million National Broadband Network (itself a project that should be aligned with DepEd's infrastructure-building, but isn't) is only the latest case in point.

So, a word to the wise. Let's keep it real. Let's scale back the project, let's reconsider the funding, let's make the entire process transparent. Lapus is not going anywhere just yet, is he?

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TU bets still waiting for Mindanao magic?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS CONceded defeat in the senatorial elections. Earlier, she had also asked everybody to accept the results of the elections. Her former chief of staff, Mike Defensor, has done so. So what are the other members of Team Unity doing? Migz Zubiri and Ralph Recto may be justified in hanging on, but Prospero Pichay? He's behind Defensor who has conceded. It's impossible for him to catch up and land in the winning circle unless the "operators" do some magic. After all, it is called the Magic 12, so why not weave some magic to land in it?

The operators did perform magic in parts of Mindanao, but they overdid it. After succeeding tremendously in the 2004 elections—thus sending Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Malacañang—and getting away with it, they became overconfident, so confident that they gave the Team Unity candidates a 12-0 victory in the province of Maguindanao (probably expecting a bonus), a score that even the Commission on Elections found "statistically improbable." That is why the canvassing of votes from Maguindanao and North Cotabato was deferred. The figures are simply unbelievable.

The Certificates of Canvass (CoCs) from Lanao del Norte, Surigao del Norte and Sultan Kudarat have not yet been forwarded to the National Canvassing Board in Manila because of questionable Statements of Votes (SoVs) and provincial CoCs.

The canvassing of votes in Lanao del Sur and Basilan is still going on. Together, these Muslim provinces have more than 3 million registered voters. These are the votes that Pichay et al. are hoping will catapult them to the Magic 12.

That was why the administration confidently predicted a 12-0 win for Team Unity. Its operators did it before, they can do it again.

All the pieces are falling into place. So, what administration officials actually meant when they said that "political machinery" and "command votes" would do the trick was "wholesale cheating." Cheating done openly, blatantly and shamelessly. Even during the special elections, where the eyes of the nation were focused, the operators performed their magic shamelessly. They were unafraid and overconfident probably because they were following orders from administration officials.

But so lacking are they of conscience that they forgot other people still have theirs. They didn't figure in the Muslim teachers and election inspectors who couldn't stomach the cheating. Although afraid for their safety, they spilled the beans, first to Comelec provincial officials, and when the latter turned a deaf ear on them, to media.

I watched an administration factotum, on the television program "Crossroads," criticize the witnesses. "Why did they go to the media? Why didn't they go through the legal process? Why are they hiding their identities?" he asked.

If the legal process does not move, if the public officials are deaf, wouldn't you go to somebody who will listen and who is credible? If you know that the people behind the cheating will go after you, wouldn't you try to protect yourself? Instead of impugning the credibility of the witnesses, the government should welcome their exposé on poll cheating and put them under the Witness Protection Program. Why is the administration scolding them instead?

If media had not exposed the cheating, do you think the GMA government and the Comelec will do something about it? Do you think the public will ever know that wholesale cheating took place in Mindanao?

I said in a previous column that the Comelec should take special efforts to prevent cheating in the 2010 elections because the stakes in those elections, being a presidential one, are very high. Some ambitious politicians will stop at nothing to win. When somebody gains the presidency by cheating, what follows is continuing instability in the nation, as is happening now.

Mindanao is an area of special concern. This was where the dead rose from their graves to vote; this was where the birds and the bees also voted. Now voters here vote as if with identical minds. And now votes are counted even in places where no voting took place. This is where, according to administration mouthpieces, voters meekly vote according to the dictates of their leaders.

Isn't dictating to voters whom to vote for a form of coercion punishable under the Omnibus Election Code? Isn't offering huge sums to barangays that give Team Unity a 12-0 win a form of vote-buying? Aren't these acts punishable by law? Aren't the Mindanao leaders guilty of these violations?

We have a new law, the Electoral Sabotage Law that punishes wholesale cheating—such as was done in Maguindanao—with life imprisonment. This is a new law. This was passed because wholesale poll cheating is getting out of control. But will it be a dead letter law so soon?

Criminals repeat their crimes when they are not punished. Haven't you noticed that the operators in the recent elections were the same ones mentioned in the cheating in 2004? They got away with it then, so they are doing it again.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKES:

1. Do you know where the word congressman came from?

In the Animal Kingdom, a group of lions is called a pride; a group of wolves is a pack; of cattle, a herd; of fish, a school; of birds, a flock; of ants, a colony; of whales, a pod; and of baboons, a congress. Of the animals mentioned, only the baboons resemble politicians physically and mentally.

Now you know.

2. A boy, home from school, asked his mother: My classmates said babies come out through a hole where s—t also comes out. Is this true?

Mother: Of course. Where do you think congressmen come from?

The times they are a-changin'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M STILL REVELING OVER THE RESULTS OF the senatorial race, even as I'm still fuming over the use of soldiers to terrorize the voters into keeping their distance from the progressive party-list groups, which accounted for those groups' minor debacle in these elections. But I'll leave the latter for some other day.

I confess I didn't expect the kind of result I'm seeing right now for a couple of reasons.

One is the failure of the opposition to harness to the full the potential for a protest vote. I still think the non-TU candidates could have swept the field had they openly, explicitly, earnestly harped on the election as a referendum on Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. What they did was advertise themselves on individual merit and not on their opposition to illegitimate rule. Except Antonio Trillanes, and he is in the Magic 12 on the strength of it. It is a testament to how deep the public resentment against this government goes that the opposition has done exceedingly well in spite of itself.

Two is the cheating which I expected to reach the same scale as 2004, if not exceed it. I couldn't see anything standing in the way of it. At the very least, the people who wrought it before were never punished—indeed they were rewarded amply. At the very most, the public seemed unable, and often enough unwilling, to do anything about it. Everyone expected massive cheating to be wrought, and that very expectation guaranteed it would become self-fulfilling.

But lo and behold, only a couple of TU senatorial bets are left standing. The reasons owe in part to accident and in part to intention, in part to the will of heaven and in part to the wit of earth.

Probably the most important reason there—though not a very visible one, in more ways than one—was the absence of the First Gentleman on the scene. If anything demonstrates that he is a public figure and not a private one (as he insisted when he filed libel charges against more than 40 journalists), this is it. When the FG lay on a hospital bed, Prospero Nograles said that his importance could not be overestimated since he was the one who oiled the relationship between his wife and the generals. Quite apart from that, he had also been known to oil the political machinery that made administration candidates win, or at least emerge as winners—those are two different things—including his wife in 2004. Construe the verb "oil" as you will.

Struck by disease on Easter Sunday, he wasn't there to lend a hand in these elections. If that didn't exactly put the administration party into disarray, it at least put a lot of bumps along the way. It left whole lines of communication broken, which made it a lot harder to do what needed to be done to win. The utter lack of subtlety, or indeed the in-your-face thrust of the middle finger, with which TU tried to manipulate things in Lanao and Maguindanao testifies to a machinery that had fallen into disrepair: Those guys were really desperate.

To his credit, Mike Defensor has conceded defeat. Though the manner in which he has done so shows the depths to which our political culture has sunk: It makes out accepting being rejected by the voters as something one does out of generosity or the goodness of one's heart. The subtext of it is: I'm not going to apply myself further to produce an alternative outcome. Last I saw Pichay on TV, he was still exuding confidence about the final reel.

Yet another reason for the administration debacle was that the military refused to do as Norberto Gonzales and Hermogenes Esperon bid. Esperon's denial that he gave a standing order to the rank-and-file to vote straight TU notwithstanding, there is no lack of military officers who will swear to, and testify, to the fact that he did. What appears to have clinched the rank-and-file's resistance to what their superiors wanted was the latter's determination to oppress one of the AFP's own, who was Trillanes. The order to pluck out from walls and edifices Trillanes' posters and make him disappear from public view—one hears in more ways than one—went unheeded. When history is written, Trillanes' contribution to this election will have gone beyond having doing the impossible and winning.

I'm waiting with bated breath for what happens when the Senate opens—whether Trillanes will swear his oath as lawmaker in the stockade or in the halls of his new home. Indeed, whether Trillanes will be writing laws on a rough desk by sunlight pouring through the slits of iron bars, or on the fluorescent-lit mahogany table of an air-conditioned Senate room. My apologies to Trillanes, but I most sincerely hope they do not let him go. The sheer drama of the first is tantalizing.

And finally, my hope is restored. The calls by sundry enlightened, committed and enraged groups for the public to be vigilant did not fall on deaf ears. It wasn't merely that the voters chose the right people, or at least rejected the wrong ones—Ed Panlilio is governor of Pampanga and Jesse Robredo is mayor of Naga City notwithstanding the deviltry of their enemies; and Virgilio Garcillano and Manny Pacquaio will be called many things except "Honorable"—it was also that they stood their ground in the counting amid efforts to shoo them away in many places. The presence of foreign observers did help—I don't know what would have happened in Pampanga if they hadn't descended there in full force—but in the end it was the public itself that proved to be a stout, if not unyielding, wall against cheating. There's a lesson to be learned there, which is that when heaven and earth come together, there's precious little that can't be done.

I don't know about you, but these days I find myself humming Bob Dylan: For the times they are a-changin'.

A cautionary tale

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

THIS IS THE STORY OF 914 FAMILIES (5,000 men, women and children) evicted from their homes by the Metro Manila Development Authority. They were literally left in the streets or under the bridges.

It is not the biggest tragedy ever, but it is an example of how society and especially the government are weakening the poor people's trust in the traditional, democratic and non-violent ways (e.g., labor unions, farmer organizations and urban poor federations) they have used to improve their lives. If we are not careful, we will lose the courage, vitality and independence of the poor. For this reason, this story is a cautionary tale.

The story began last February with the eviction of 57 families living under the bridge on Osmeña Highway, over the Tripa de Gallina estero. A fight broke out between the barangay captain (who supported the people) and the MMDA. Shots were fired by the MMDA police and everyone, including the writer, ran in fear for their lives.

The families had filed a case in court to stop the eviction, but the MMDA evicted them before the judge could render a decision.

The MMDA doesn't believe in relocation, although eviction without relocation runs counter to the Constitution, RA 7279, international covenants—and simple Christian decency, as the Philippine bishops have repeatedly stated. The eviction continued until it had driven away a total of 914 families. Bishop Broderick Pabillo, auxiliary bishop of the Manila Archdiocese, visited the families and complained about the situation to the Religious Affairs Office of Malacañang. A meeting with the government's housing agencies was called. But the bishop found the meeting "deeply disappointing." The agencies blamed one another for the damage done to the people. The bishop held a press conference, but nothing changed.

The government offered the homeless families a place in Calauan which is 100 kilometers away, a town best known for its former mayor, who is now in Muntinlupa for double murder. Some families tried the Calauan relocation site, but a number of them have come back—the place has no houses, water, light or jobs.

A family wouldn't throw and leave its cat or dog 100 km away to starve.

Together with poor people from the SouthRail tracks (who also face eviction), the women met with Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales last April 15. He listened quietly for nearly two hours to their problems, and promised to write to the President, asking her to help the people with their requests, including their desire to see her. The letters were delivered, but there was no answer—until the women went to major newspapers and a news story appeared saying the people would march to Malacañang on May 9. Government agencies then came to life.

A meeting was called at Caritas by the Religious Affairs Office with the same housing agencies Bishop Pabillo had met. The result was no better; no one was in a position to assure the women of an appointment with the President. Also, the agencies could not improve on the Calauan relocation offer and they could not tell the MMDA to stop, although some agencies agreed its actions were illegal.

The women decided they would march with 1,000 people.

The women surprised me. First, they really expected to see the President. (Few ordinary people in the United States feel they will ever see the American president about their problems.) This belief in a caring President is very important. People can tolerate abuse from bureaucrats if they believe that the man or woman at the top is on their side. Second, they weren't angry with the officials they met along the way. They didn't make snide remarks as middle-class people do when they get into bad experiences with government people.

There were only about 300 people who joined the march. Many were afraid of going to Mendiola because of its tragic history; some were persuaded not to go by ideological groups; and others were busy with election matters. And some leaders couldn't deliver the "warm bodies" they had promised.

The Manila police were sympathetic, but they wouldn't let the people near Mendiola. So the march wended through Morayta down to Avenida and Recto and to Far Eastern University where the 300 held the rally. Even though they were marching away from Mendiola and there was no "march music," it was a thrill to see the 300 poor on the move. It appeared like a preview—"seen dimly in a faulty mirror"—of that day when the poor shall have taken their place among the nation's decision-makers. Instead of addressing Malacañang, the women talked to the youth and the future at FEU.

The women were asked why they thought they deserved an appointment with the President—the questions sounded like: "Who do you think you are?" Their answer was: The President is the only person who can stop the MMDA. She is the only one who can order the NHA to do the reasonable things the poor want, after all, she appointed the bureaucrats who can't or won't help them. And why can't 300 poor women see her? Is this a democracy or not? the women asked.

The women had done everything possible. They had gone to court, media, the Church, Malacañang's Religious Affairs Office; attended interagency meetings; and, finally, came as close as they could to Malacañang. What else can poor people do in pursuit of basic rights?

If the poor aren't treated better, they will lose their initiative and courage, the very qualities needed for change; and they will lose their trust in society's institutions, especially government. If that happens, we are in for a very dismal, doomed future.

We need economic growth, but equally we need to empower the poor. Even the World Bank agrees with that.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates. His e-mail address is upa@pldtdsl.net.

The liars' last reunion

WORLD VIEW

Nina L. Khrushcheva

THIS WEEK'S G-8 SUMMIT WILL PROBABLY BE the last such meeting for Presidents George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin. Seven years ago, at their first meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Bush looked into Putin's eyes and somehow spotted the soul of a Christian gentleman, not that of a secret policeman. Next week, they shouldn't be surprised if they see a mirror of each other, because both men have exemplified the arrogance of power.

Bush and Putin both came to power in 2000, a year when their countries were scrambling to regain international respect—Russia from the chaos of the Yeltsin years, and the United States from the failed impeachment of President Clinton. Each country thought it was getting an unthreatening mediocrity. But both men, on finding themselves in positions of authority, ruled from their default positions: Bush as an evangelical convinced that God was on America's side, and Putin as a KGB graduate convinced that all power comes from intimidation and threats.

And what's the result? Convinced that he is right, and incurious to hear contrary arguments, Bush felt free to undermine the rule of law in America with warrantless domestic surveillance, erosion of due process and defense of torture, in addition to misleading the public and refusing to heed expert advice or recognize facts on the ground. From the tax cuts in 2001 to the war in Iraq, Bush's self-righteous certitude led him to believe that he could say and do anything to get his way.

The damage Bush's self-confidence and self-delusion have inflicted was magnified by his gross overestimation of America's power. Quite simply, he thought that America could go it alone in pursuing his foreign policy because no one could stop him. While his father lined up world support and troops from over a dozen countries for the first Gulf War, the son thought that allies were more hindrance than help; except for Tony Blair, he did not care to have them. Four years later, Bush's arrogance and mendacity have been exposed for the entire world, including the American public, to see.

Putin also succumbed to the same arrogance of power. Buoyed by high oil prices, he now seeks to bestride the world as if the social calamities that bedevil Russia—a collapsing population, a spiraling AIDS and tuberculosis crisis, corruption mushrooming to levels unimagined by Yeltsin—do not matter. At a high-level security meeting in Munich this past February, Putin, who usually draws on the secretive, manipulative and confrontational Cold War paradigm of what constitutes Russian diplomatic behavior, lashed out at the United States with the sort of language unheard of since Khrushchev said "We will bury you." American actions were "unilateral," "illegitimate" and had forged a "hotbed of further conflicts."

Putin's assessment of US unilateralism (if stripped of its overheated rhetoric) may be correct; the trouble is that he lacks credibility to extol moderation in foreign policy. High oil prices have helped him rebuild and centralize the "strong state" that was his goal from the outset of his presidency. But his recent attempts to use Russia's energy resources for political coercion in Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus and elsewhere have exposed Russia as an unreliable partner, unnerving even the Chinese, who do not wish to see a reconstituted Russian empire on their border.

The Russian public, habituated to authoritarianism, wants Russia's rulers to be firm. Yet the true test of a ruler is not to pander to his people's expectations, but to peer into the future and match the country's aspirations with its needs and capacities. In this, Putin's arrogance is failing Russia miserably. His monomaniacal drive to centralize power is driving out the very expertise that the country needs to flourish. Shell and BP are being expelled from the oil industry at the very moment that Russian oil production is declining dramatically. His embittered attempts to counter American power are equally short-sighted: helping Iran develop its nuclear program and selling high-tech weapons to China are hardly in Russia's long-term strategic interest.

As usual, history is set on fast-forward in America. Everyone can now see the gross and historic failures of the Bush presidency. Indeed, the American people have preempted the historians, rebuking Bush by electing a Democratic Congress in November 2006. Meanwhile, Russia's troubles remain hidden behind the strong-arm tactics and oil bloated coffers of Putin's autocratic bureaucracy. But the fact that Russia's social and economic diseases are going unaddressed has consigned the country to the long-term decline that his presidency was supposed to reverse.

In the 20th century, the Cold War parity between Russia and America was apparent. For Russians, America was an evil empire, the world of capitalist exploitation and a nuclear superpower, but also a cradle of economic prosperity and individual freedom. For America, Russia, too, was an evil empire, the world of communist expansionism and a nuclear superpower, but also a cradle of science, spirit and soul.

A similar parity has characterized the Bush-Putin era. However, unlike the Americans, Russia's people have not yet understood the price of arrogant power run amuck. *Project Syndicate*

Nina Khrushcheva teaches international affairs at The New School in New York. Her book "Imagining Nabokov: Russia Between Art and Politics" will be published this autumn.

A history of the House

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE 13TH CONGRESS COMES TO AN END, AND the 14th Congress begins, with the centennial year of the House of Representatives. In 1907, the first legislative elections were held for the Philippine Assembly, inaugurating a practically uninterrupted legislative tradition that lives on to this day. Jose de Venecia is, thus, the centennial Speaker, the latest in a line that began with Sergio Osmeña Sr.: indeed, De Venecia can count himself among the longest-serving Speakers of all time, though with the Constitution's term limits, no modern-day Speaker can hope to match Osmeña's (1907-1922) or Manuel Roxas' (1922-1933) uninterrupted service.

In 1907, out of a national population of 7,844,000 people, 104,966 Filipinos were entitled to vote, slightly under the number of voters (143,029) who participated in the popular vote for the American presidency a century before (Jefferson's 1804 election). As it was, 98,251 voted 59 Nacionalistas, 16 Progresistas and 5 Independents into office. The Nacionalistas would remain in possession of the lower house for the next 40 years. In 1909 and 1912, the Nacionalistas would establish their majority with 62 representatives.

In 1916, when the Philippine Senate was established, the lower house majority of the Nacionalistas increased to 75 representatives, while the opposition groups were reduced to 7 Progresistas, 2 Terceristas and 6 Independents who decided they needed to reinvent themselves as the Democrata Party. The closest the Democratas ever got to being successful, politically, was in the watershed year of 1922.

In that year, out of a population of 10,991,100 and with an electorate of 2,061,000, the Nacionalistas divided on the question of how the party should rule and manage legislative affairs. Our history paints this election as a crucial one, and it was; but it is interesting to note that what would be the most fiercely contested election of the day only inspired 685,000 qualified voters to actually cast their ballots—not a resounding endorsement of elections, the issues, or the parties. To the lower house were elected 33 Colectivistas (former Nacionalistas), 22 Nacionalistas and 25 Democratas.

Even more interesting is the difference between the party figures above and the numbers that actually declared their party affiliations when they filed their candidacies: 23 Colectivistas, 24 Nacionalistas, 26 Democratas and 10 Independents. By the day they took their office, the independents had become instant Colectivistas.

The Nacionalistas preferred to reunite with the Colectivistas, creating the Partido Nacionalista Consolidado; the first of two historic chances to create a genuine two-party system was lost (even the Americans had hoped the Colectivistas and Nacionalistas would evolve into liberal and conservative parties). By 1934, again a watershed year as the electorate divided on the issue of support for, or in rejection of, the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Independence Act, the Nacionalistas divided into pros and antis and the Democratas disbanded; the result in the lower house was an overwhelming victory for the antis with 70 representatives, and a major defeat for the pros, with 19 representatives. As one observer put it, having disbanded, the old Democratas, now in the anti ranks, did better electorally than they ever had as a party. They won 20 seats.

And in the first national election our country had, in September 1935, what won was not a party but a coalition of pros and antis. There would be no single administration party until 1937. When the fusion of the pros and antis was approved, the President of the Philippines at the time said the country would not have a strong opposition either in 10 or 50 years after independence. The next year the Nacionalistas won 98 seats in the lower house. That's 100 percent. Not a single oppositionist won, and at no other time before, or since, has an administration so dominated the legislature. By 1940, in fact, "Partyless Democracy" was being proposed. It was hooted down by youth leaders and the press, but it was a statement of what had always been.

In 1941, out of a population of 16,952,000 there were 3,000,000 registered voters but only 1,700,000 bothered to vote; they voted 95 Nacionalistas into the lower house and only three oppositionists. The politicians who flourished under this system and mobilized their electorate didn't disappear with World War II, or even the populism reinvented by Magsaysay; they held on until Macapagal, when it all fell apart.

The elections of 1946—when six Democratic allies, one NP congressman, were not allowed to sit by the Liberal Party—was a sign of things to come. The party system, under fairly strong leaders such as Roxas and Magsaysay, was instinctively a one-party system which believed democracy consisted of factions within the ruling party. Two details, I think, suggest that the electorate has always known this and has been consistently underwhelmed. In 1953, there were 5,603,000 registered voters but only 3,592,244 cast their votes—even in that famous Magsaysay landslide.

Indeed, the secret to political power is that symbolically, in terms of legitimacy, the Senate is the expression of the people's approval or disapproval of an administration; but the practical application of power—in terms of resources—is expressed in the House: and it is for that reason that no administration has ever lost the House, not even when presidents lost their bids for reelection.

* * *

On June 7, "Assembly of the Nation: An Illustrated History of the House of Representatives, 1907-2007," published by Studio5 and commissioned by the House of Representatives, will be launched at the Batasang Pambansa complex.

Raising kids and teaching flying

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

AS I MENTIONED IN MY LAST COLUMN, THE CLASS OF 1957 of the PAF Flying School marked its golden anniversary last Saturday with a reunion on the grounds of Fernando Air Base in Lipa City. The guest of honor, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., accompanied by Air Force chief Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino, led the trooping of the line, followed by the golden and silver jubilarians who were the special guests at this annual gathering of PAF airmen.

One of the joys of attending a reunion of retired and active military officers is that, if you are a bit observant, you can easily spot some of the rising stars of the organization—young officers like Eduardo Oban, Oscar Rabena, Rene Samonte and Salvador Mison Jr. I won't give their ranks or their classes. With these gentlemen moving up the leadership ladder, the Air Force will remain in good hands for years to come. This is not to say that my line of vision is limited to the officers mentioned. It just so happens I had the good fortune of meeting them at the reunion.

* * *

The Air Force was always my first choice for branch of service. As a young boy, watching planes flying in tight formation gave me goose bumps and made me dream of one day reaching out for "the wide blue yonder." A lot of folks thought it was a dangerous kind of sport, but somehow this never entered my mind.

Unfortunately, when I graduated from the Philippine Military Academy in 1956, there was an urgent need for officers to beef up army units in the campaign against the Hukbalahaps, or Huks. The Huks were the earlier version of the New People's Army and the late President Ramon Magsaysay, who had won the presidency partly on a vow to crush the dissident movement, had issued instructions that all new PMA graduates be fielded with the Battalion Combat Teams (BCTs) of the Philippine Army.

So instead of proceeding to our choice of service, we were all diverted to Army headquarters and assigned to field units mostly in the southern Tagalog region where the insurgency was most serious.

After a while, the Air Force took us in and soon we were awarded our aviation wings, symbol of military flight proficiency. For all of us, it was a dream come true.

* * *

Graduation broke up the class. Some were assigned to the Fighter Wing; others remained at Fernando Air Base to serve as instructors for the incoming classes. I was with the latter group. Why some guys end up as fighter pilots and others as instructor pilots is probably a matter of judgement about an individual's temperament and character. Theoretically, the hot-shot, gung-ho boys go to the fighters while the more level-headed, deliberate fellows make good instructors.

At any rate, teaching a guy to fly (there were no female students then) is very much unlike most teaching jobs. In fact, I would say it is the most extraordinary teaching job one could ever handle, almost like raising kids to be responsible citizens of the community.

As they grow up, you teach your kids how to take care of themselves; how to behave; how to distinguish between right and wrong; how to recognize danger signs along the way and how to recover from mistakes made. If you control their lives too closely, not allowing them much leeway to do their thing, making all decisions for them, they will always be dependent on you and when the time comes for them to act on their own, they will find it difficult to do so wisely. On the other hand, if you allow them too much freedom, without having developed some sense of responsibility; if you fail to apply the necessary controls when they do wrong; if you don't guide them and explain how and why things should be done, they could turn out to be dangerous members of the community.

It is the same with teaching a "dodo" how to fly. (A dodo is an extinct flightless bird that used to inhabit the island of Mauritius. In aviation schools, the "dodo" is a flying student who has not yet soloed.)

In the beginning, you take him up to have a look at the world beneath his wings. You point out some of the places which could serve as emergency landing fields in case of trouble; you also indicate what places should be avoided for any reason. Then you demonstrate the basic maneuvers and after a while, you give him a chance to try them himself, never mind if he turns the plane upside down. Next come the more complicated and possibly dangerous maneuvers, like the spin. You teach him how to recover and emphasize to him that he must have sufficient altitude to correct his unusual position.

After a while, you start him on the more critical aspects of any flight—takeoffs and landings. In going through the whole gamut of aircraft maneuvers, it is always the same sequence. First explain and discuss with him on the ground the exercise. Then demonstrate in the air how to perform the maneuver, guide him along as he does it himself and, finally, when you think he is ready, let him do the maneuvers alone.

What is important is that, at a certain point, you must give him the controls. If you don't, he will never learn. If you give the controls too early, he may not be ready and it could mean disaster. This is the grave danger that any flight instructor faces. His life is in the hands of his student and a wrong determination by the instructor could be fatal for both.

The greatest sense of satisfaction you can have is seeing your student fly solo for the first time. When he gets into the cockpit without you, and runs up his engine for takeoff, your balls are in your throat, and you're praying that you made the right decision to let him go up alone. The same is true when he comes in for the first landing, watching his plane slowly approach the runway on finals, and settling down gently until the plane comes to a full stop.

It's a great feeling seeing him step down from the cockpit and you thank the Almighty that everything went well for your boy. Raising kids is very much like teaching people how to fly.

* * *

Incidentally, the first assignment I received after graduation was to carry out an administrative flight to and from Baguio City. The mission was to pick up my cousin Col. Horacio Farolan, the PMA Commandant of Cadets and bring him to Manila for a conference at GHQ.

Two weeks ago, surrounded by family, close relatives and friends, Brigadier General Farolan, PMA class 1940 celebrated his 90th birthday. He remains in the best of health and we wish him all the best in the years ahead.

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LETTERS

Inspiring column for the young

MICHAEL TAN WAS RIGHT IN saying that the front-page feature story on the six young scientists (INQUIRER, 5/25/07) provided a respite from the depressing news about electoral fraud and violence.

Indeed, the INQUIRER follows its mission of balanced news.

Being a Filipino, I am very proud of these young scientists. May their tribe increase. (I know there are many others like them, it's just that they have yet to be motivated.) Also, being a classroom teacher (I'm teaching 7th Grade Pre-Algebra at the Hopwood Junior High in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands), I'm intrigued by Hester Mana Umayam's winning presentation of ethnomathematics-geometric patterns of Kalinga weavings. I read that when Hester presented this, he was wearing the traditional G-string (with all of those patterns on it) which made the presentation very authentic.

I am teaching "transformation," a geometry topic which includes tessellation, using translation, reflection, rotation and dilation. Hester is very famous for tessellation and I bet there are many Kalingans who are as talented as the guy.

I thank Tan for enriching young people. That column, I'm sure, inspired young scientists to come out into the open.

—BOYET ESCOBER,
mathboyet123@yahoo.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Time to look beyond election

THE ELECTION IS OVER BUT the many issues discussed during the campaign are far from resolved. Most are still focused on politics, and very few are taking action regarding another equally important, if not more important, concern—the opening of classes for school year 2007-2008.

What has been done to prepare our public schools? How about the problem of flooding that forces schools to cancel classes during heavy rains? How about the school in Taysan, Batangas where a teacher died during the election? Have the damaged classrooms been repaired? How about the family of the teacher? Her students?

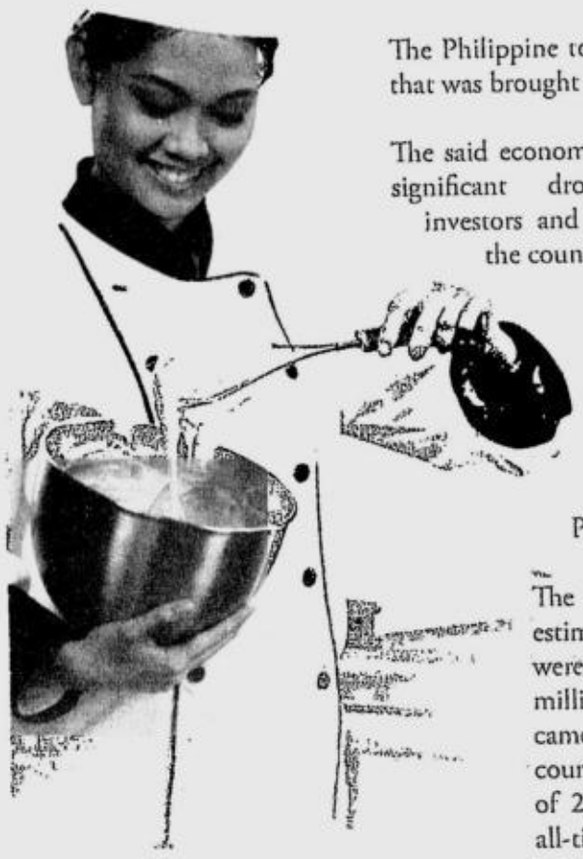
It is true that the Department of Education's Brigada Eskwela program has helped in preparing some public schools for the opening of classes. But a lot still remains to be done. We hope that the newly elected officials are marking this concern about schools No. 1 in their "To Do" list.

Newly elected officials should not hold their victory parties before they have made sure that at least all school buildings are ready for our children—meaning, safe, clean and cleared of election litter; that there are enough teachers on the first day of classes; that classes will not be canceled because of flooding.

We're still all excited to know who will win in the senatorial race. We are all still praying that there will be no *dagdag-bawas*. We all believe that if there are valid election protests, they should be acted on. But it's about time we looked beyond the election and faced other important issues such as education.

—GAY MARIE M. FRANCISCO,
gayfrancisco@hotmail.com

Demand up for HRM graduates



The Philippine tourism industry has recovered from the slump that was brought about by the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

The said economic crisis that hit the Philippines resulted in a significant drop in foreign investors and tourist influx in the country.

The crisis led to a record-low slump in hotel and resort occupancy rates. But now comes a major turnaround and Philippine tourism is now on a resurgence.

The end of 2006 sets an all-time high record of about three million visitors who came into the country.

The government estimates that there were about three million visitors who came into the country by the end of 2006, setting an all-time record high.

The tourism boom in the Philippines follows a global trend that resulted into a huge demand for Hotel and Restaurant Management (HRM) graduates and professionals.

Statistics from the World Tourism Organization shows that the tourism industry is the world's second largest industry that is able to employ 221 million individuals worldwide.

It is essential, therefore, for Filipino HRM professional aspirants to be aptly prepared through proper education and world-class quality training that will serve as an edge above job seekers from other countries.

STI

GOING BEYOND ICT

STI, an established educational institution, has been at the forefront of addressing the demands of the industry. Thus, its strategy is to go beyond ICT.

After launching its nursing program in 2004, STI has embarked on providing ICT-enhanced HRM courses in more than 30 of its network of over 100 schools nationwide.

STI's HRM curriculum was co-developed with the industry practitioners including board members from the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Educators of the Philippines.

To fully-equip students with the skills and know-how needed to become top-notch HRM professionals anywhere in the world, STI offers Hospitality and Restaurant Services (HRS), Hotel and Restaurant Administration (HRA) and BS Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) as its major programs.

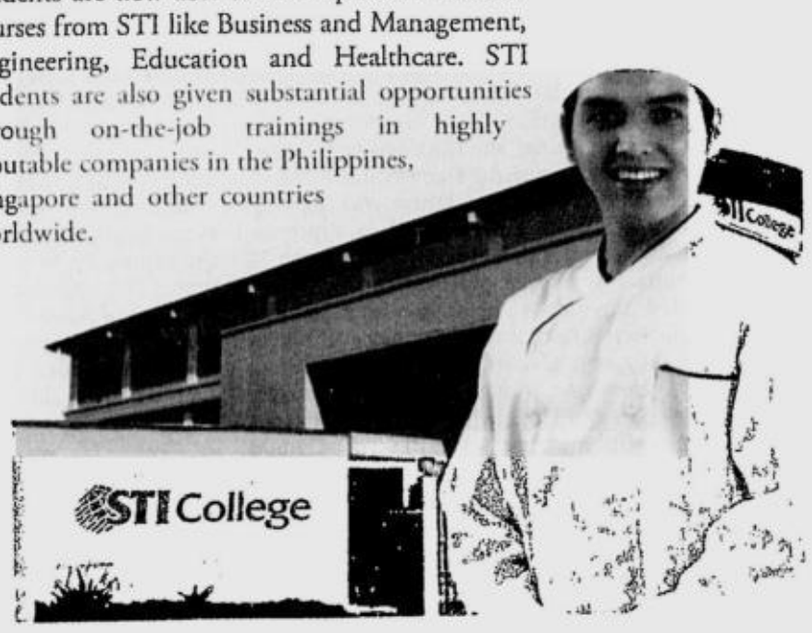
STI provides ICT-enhanced HRM courses in more than 30 of its 100 schools nationwide.

HRM students of STI can take advantage of the ladderized Hotel and Restaurant Management program, a competency-based, technical and skills specific program that is carefully designed to prepare students for employment in business establishments and also provides them with valuable experiences through the extensive Internship Program in STI's industry partners. The ladderized program leads to a four-year degree in HRM.

According to the leading provider of ICT and ICT-enhanced education in the country, its commitment goes beyond just providing education to the youth but also to make sure that its students have vast employment opportunities when they graduate.

This is the reason why STI has industry partners to complement its E2E or Enrollment to Employment System. The E2E System is STI's complete approach to human resource development. It aims to take care of the students' needs from the time they enroll up to the time they apply for a job.

STI has gone beyond ICT to continue providing quality education in other professional fields. Students are now able to take up ICT-enhanced courses from STI like Business and Management, Engineering, Education and Healthcare. STI students are also given substantial opportunities through on-the-job trainings in highly reputable companies in the Philippines, Singapore and other countries worldwide.



No dredging in Calatagan

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS STORY ON Landco Pacific Corp. that appeared in the May 27 issue of the INQUIRER. The company wishes to state the following:

1. Our Playa Calatagan project is in the early stages of development. There are several critical construction activities going on, one of which is the project's main drainage line. The early development of this line is needed to channel all surface and storm water properly and safely.

There is no "dredging activity" yet. What the INQUIRER story adverted to was the main component of the drainage line. And we are not using any mechanical dredgers—certainly not the kind that threaten or destroy coral life. Neither are we dumping excavated material into the sea. Contrary to what was alleged, there is no incident of siltation. Neither is there any activity along the beach.

2. There has been no halt to our development work. It is true that some NGO representatives mentioned in the story did go to the project site sometime late last month and tried to stop our development work. There was no legal or even moral basis for such an attempted stoppage.

3. Following that attempt, a meeting was held last May 8, with all stakeholders and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, present. All concerns were aired in that meeting and all the participants affirmed Landco's position that all its activities remained consistent with the plans presented to and approved by the DENR. We can provide anyone interested with a copy of the minutes of that meeting, upon request.

4. In the same report, the Batangas Penro (provincial environment and natural resources officer) was quoted as saying that "Landco did not violate any ECC (Environmental Compliance Certificate) provision in their dredging activities at the site. The excavation is not large-scale and is part of (Landco's) environmental management plan. Dredging is not prohibited if (done) just to remove the silt deposit in the area. But if you would dredge the area (without a purpose), then it is."

5. As far as Landco is concerned, the alleged dredging is a non-issue. Landco is a responsible developer of world-class leisure and tourist destinations. As a matter of policy and practice, Landco consistently complies with all the regulations and standards set by the DENR and all duly authorized government agencies and regulators.

Our projects are so rooted in and dependent on their successful integration into their communities that it does not make sense for us to destroy the very products we are selling.

Playa Calatagan is a work in progress. We invite any interested party to come to the site and observe our construction activities there.

We appeal to all parties concerned to stick to the facts and avoid conjectures.

—ALFRED XEREZ-BURGOS III,
senior vice president, sales and marketing,
Landco Pacific Corp.

The story on Playa Calatagan was based not on mere speculations but on facts. Landco says that there were no dredging activities in the site. The Municipal Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management Council (MFARMC) has already refuted this claim with photos and in its ocular inspection report, copies of which were furnished to the INQUIRER. The documents and the interviews with DENR and MFARMC officials provide enough weight to the story. All the data reported in the story were verified and checked before publication.

—MARLON ALEXANDER LUISTRO,
correspondent, Inquirer Southern Luzon

'We don't give up'

I FOUND THE ARTICLES ABOUT THE ELECtions thought-provoking. They were written well. But I would like to react particularly to the Youngblood article titled "Choice among evils." (INQUIRER, 5/28/07)

Nurhatima Dumato Aljani wrote that she didn't vote because she didn't find a candidate who deserved her vote. She described voting as choosing from among the lesser evil, and I don't necessarily agree with that.

I agree with most of what she wrote though. But there are people in our government who refuse to be drawn into the easy road of doing things—like cheating and lying.

Yes, there were many Filipinos who voted for people of dubious character; and there were also others who didn't register, but not because they thought all the candidates were corrupt.

We have a choice as to whom we want to put in government. We have to exercise that choice if we want to see them there. We don't give up.

—ANDREA RECTO,
20 Pilar Banzon St.,
BF Homes, Parañaque City

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8 abductors charged

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Police said charges of forcible abduction and serious illegal detention would be filed today against eight suspects in the May 31 abduction of a German treasure hunter and his three Filipino companions in Pikit, North Cotabato.

Senior Supt. Alfredo Toroctocon, intelligence chief of the Central Mindanao Police Command, told the INQUIRER that formal charges had been prepared based on witnesses' testimonies.

Only one of the suspects has so far been identified as a certain Kocal, said to be a contact person of the German victim, Thomas Wallraf, and the man selling nickel babbits.

The other suspects, Toroctocon said, were identified in the charge sheet as "John Does."

Wallraf, 44, of Cologne, Germany, and his companions came from Davao City and were on their way here to talk to a man claiming to be selling nickel babbits when abducted in Barangay Batolawan in Pikit.

Witnesses said the abductors tied the victims before they were taken for a long walk from Barangays Balabuk and Balongis in Pikit to Mabundas in the neighboring town of Pagalungan in Maguindanao.

The abductors were compelled to free Wallraf, his Filipino-American wife May Sharon Jackson, Consuela San Juan and Diego Delfin after they were intercepted by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) guerrillas at about 3 p.m. of the same day.

Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio, regional police chief, hailed the police and military units in the area, as well as the MILF leadership and the local populace for their cooperation in the immediate rescue of the kidnap victims.

Serapio said the group behind the kidnapping belonged to the Moro National Liberation Front "Lost Command" led by a certain Commander Datukan Samad.

Police will include Samad in the charge sheet as soon as witnesses execute affidavits against him, he said.

Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao

3 suspected NPA rebels captured

CAMP NAKAR, LUCENA CITY—THREE SUSpected New People's Army rebels believed to be involved in the burning and bombing of a Globe communication tower in Masbate last week were arrested by government forces in two separate occasions, according to Lt. Col. Roderick Parayno, spokesperson of the Army's Southern Luzon Command.

Parayno on Thursday said joint police and Army forces captured a certain Jaime Balbuena, alias "Ka Jun" during pursuit operations in Barangay Puro in Aroroy, Masbate on May 30.

Balbuena was on his way to his house in Barangay Poblacion in Mandaon town after buying medicine allegedly intended for his wounded comrades when he was arrested.

The government troops recovered from him a .357 cal. revolver, one Nokia cell phone and assorted medicines.

On May 27, immediately after pursuit operations were conducted against the rebels who tried to burn and bomb the Globe tower in Barangay Lahong, Baleno, the day before, the military captured Catherine Sioco, alias "Ka Chinchin," and Ailyn Alvarez, alias "Ka Janet," both 19.

Sioco was reportedly a Sangguniang Kabataan chair in Barangay Mapili, Balud, Masbate.

Recovered from the two were two .38 cal. revolvers, five bullets, one Claymore mine and a roll of electric cord.

Parayno said the three were part of the NPA units that tried to attack the Globe cell site in Baleno on May 26 that left three soldiers dead. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

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More losing candidates question poll results

LOSING CANDIDATES IN BATAAN, Bulacan and Antique have protested the election victories of their rivals, citing massive vote-buying, harassment and other poll-related irregularities.

In Bataan, 12 losing candidates led by former Rep. Felicito Payumo, Maria Aurora Gonzales and former Bataan Gov. Leonardo Roman on Thursday asked the Commission on Elections to declare a failure of elections in the province due to alleged massive cheating and violations of election laws that, they said, were done with the help of goons and policemen.

In San Remigio town, Antique, councilor Eduardson Petinglay, a defeated mayoral candidate has asked the Antique Regional Trial Court to nullify the results of elections for mayor for alleged partisan activities and for allegedly using soldiers deployed in the town to intimidate voters during the election period. Mayor Elizabeth Coloso was reelected chief executive in that town.

Bataan

In a petition filed on May 29, the candidates wanted the Comelec to annul the election results in Bataan and hold a special election.

In a statement, they said "massive cheating and wholesale violation of election laws were committed with impunity as they were executed with the assistance and cooperation of not only the hired goons..., other armed lawless elements, but even by some members of the Philippine National Police."

They said the respondents, led by reelected Gov. Enrique Garcia Jr. and his son, reelected Rep. Albert Garcia, also "used public vehicles and ambulance, as well as other properties and facilities of the government" in these irregularities.

The Garcias, they said, used "systematic fraud, terrorism, illegal schemes and machinations" such that thousands of registered voters were "either forced into voting for them, or to simply waive their rights altogether in both cases under threat of physical violence of armed goons."

Governor Garcia had denied these, saying Gonzales, for one, "used ready-made election returns" to "overstate" the results for her.

Gonzales, daughter of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, lost to Representative Garcia in the second congressional district race.

The Garcias denied buying votes, harassing voters and employing goons and policemen.

The governor welcomed the revision of the ballots to prove that the elder Gonzales allegedly overstated the results for his daughter.

Bataan police chief Senior Supt. Odelon Ramoneda denied that policemen helped candidates in vote-buying and other forms of poll cheating by escorting the perpetrators of those illegal acts.

"While most petitions for declaration of failure of elections had been due to what is regarded as mechanical failure such as the stoppage of the voting, counting or canvassing process because of force majeure, what happened in Bataan was a substantive failure because the true will of the people was frustrated during the last elections," the 12 complainants said.

In Bulacan, former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan on Friday asked the Comelec for a recount of votes in the gubernatorial race. Pagdanganan lost to Board Member Joselito Mendoza, brother of outgoing Bulacan Gov. Josefina de la Cruz.

Pagdanganan asked the Comelec to recount the votes in at least 4,800 precincts where, he said, the alleged fraud was committed against him.

Pagdanganan, a candidate of the Lakas-CMD, received 348,834 votes from the 21 towns and three cities of Bulacan while Mendoza of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino got 364,566 votes.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Mendoza for comment on Friday.

Antique

In his petition filed May 22, Petinglay also asked the court to declare a failure of election for the mayoral post of San Remigio or declare him as winner in the May 14 elections.

He alleged that Coloso got more votes because the officers and enlisted men of the Army's 79th Infantry Battalion campaigned for her and her partymates.

Coloso (Lakas CMD) was proclaimed on May 16 after she got 5,991 votes against 5,490 votes of Petinglay (Nationalist People's Coalition).

Petinglay claimed that on the day of the election, 158 soldiers of the 79IB voted in San Remigio for Coloso and her slate in the five precincts in the poblacion in violation of the Absentee Voting Act.

Lt. Col. Nestor Porlucas, 79IB commander, dismissed Petinglay's allegations as "alibis common to defeated politicians."

He said his battalion was unable to vote earlier in military camps as provided for by the Absentee Voting Act because the approval of the Commission on Elections of their application came in late. *Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon; Nestor Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

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Lanao town mayor faces arrest for death of rival's supporters

COTABATO CITY—THE REELECTED MAYOR OF MALABANG, Lanao del Sur and four other people, including a police superintendent, have been issued arrest warrants for the killing of two supporters of a rival mayoral candidate in the 1998 elections.

On May 24, Judge Lita Tolentino-Genilo of the Regional Trial Court in Quezon City ordered the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation to immediately arrest Malabang Mayor Anwar Balindong, Supt. Jalandoni Cota, and three others, PO1 Kennedy, Amer Oden and Ali, all surnamed Balindong.

Mayor Balindong and his companions were accused of killing two supporters of Cabib Maruhom, who was then pitted against him.

Court records showed that in May 1998, Balindong's group had a poll-related argument with the group of Maruhom at the town's police station.

The argument heated up and ensued into a shooting spree.

Killed were Maruhom supporters Dante Limbona and Ante Maguindanao while several others were injured.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to get Mayor Balindong's side.

But his brother-in-law and Malabang Vice Mayor Mautante Macacua described the warrant as recycled.

He said Balindong was able to "survive" past warrants for his arrest involving the same case by posting bail.

Macacua said the latest warrant was apparently politically-motivated.

Parouk Asira, another Balindong in-law, warned that the re-issuance of the warrant of arrest might have a "bloody" repercussion.

In Judge Genilo's latest ruling, she recommended P200,000 and P120,000 bail bond for each of the accused in the frustrated murder and attempted murder charges, respectively.

But she recommended no bail for the double murder raps.

In issuing the warrant, Genilo cited a Supreme Court ruling of Nov. 20, 2006 about a similar case involving Zenaida Limbona and Judge Ralph Lee.

She said the Balindong case had dragged on for nine years due to petitions filed by defense lawyers insisting that the accused should have been charged with double homicide instead of murder.

Genilo said the decision of the high tribunal in the Limbona versus Lee case "is clear and unequivocal and leaves no room for any interpretation."

"Proper offenses to be changed (from murder to homicide) must (consist of) two information (sic) for murder and attempted murder and two information for frustrated murder and attempted murder," she said. *Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

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Food terminals to benefit farmers

LA TRINIDAD, BENguet—The province's vegetable industry stands to gain much from the Department of Agriculture's program to modernize the *talipapa* (satellite market) system in Metro Manila.

The DA's May 31 working paper on market access identified Benguet as the major source of highland vegetables that would supply existing and future Barangay Food Terminals (BFTs) designed to improve the *talipapa* system.

The BFTs are barangay-based food depots and distribution system that would complement or expand the *talipapa* market system in selling commodities to low income families in poor villages.

The paper said there are 12 operational BFTs in Metro Manila that directly benefit 215,489 families within adjacent areas.

The BFTs are expected to boost the demand for highland vegetables, it said.

From June to December this year, Metro Manila is projected to demand the following volumes of vegetables: Cabbage, 63,051 metric tons; carrots, 16,036 MT; potatoes, 81,192 MT; and pechay, 7,064.8 MT.

The DA hoped to establish BFTs in other areas in Metro Manila and within identified economic zones in the country.

The paper identified the Benguet Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative to be the major vegetable supplier in Benguet. Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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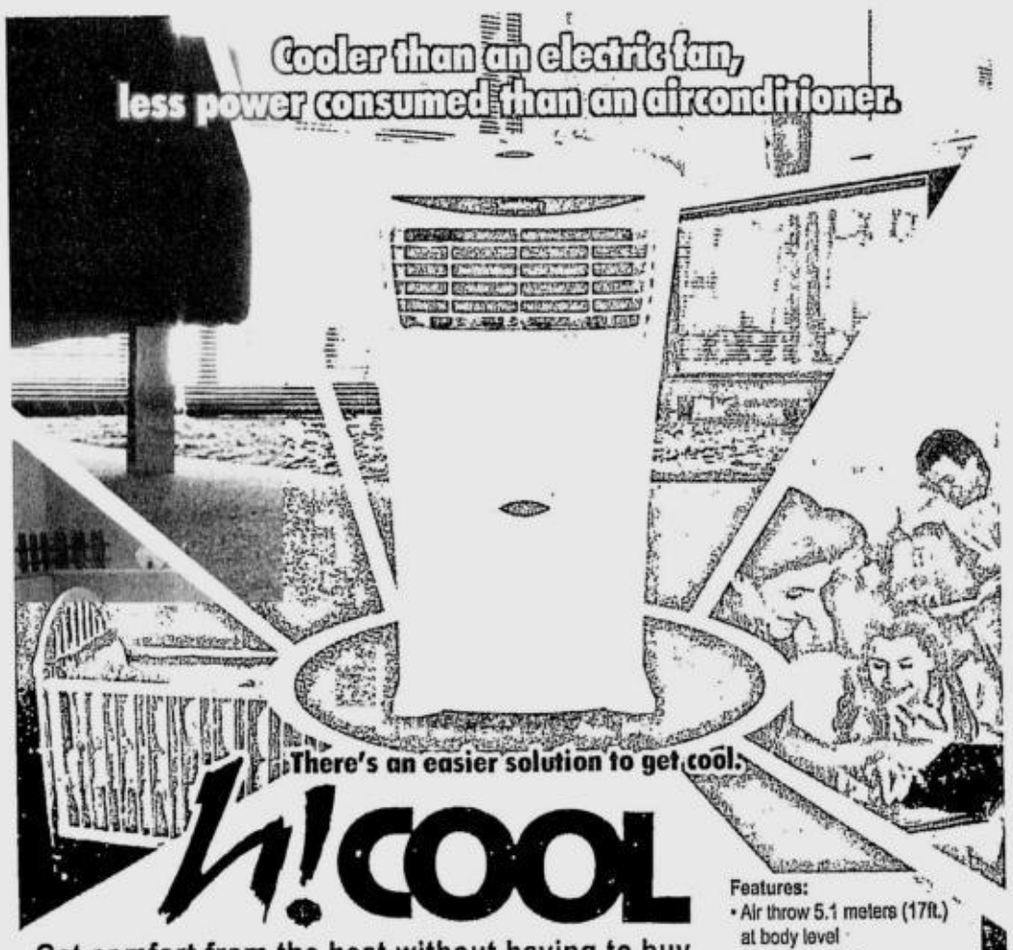
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Plot to destroy JFK airport foiled; 3 held

From page A1

decade ago when he worked as a cargo handler for a service company, according to the indictment.

Authorities said the men were motivated by hatred toward the United States., Israel and the West. Defreitas was recorded as saying he "wanted to do something to get those bastards" and he boasted that he had been taught to make bombs in Guyana.

Despite their efforts, however, the men were not able to obtain any explosives, authorities said.

"Pulling off any bombing of this magnitude would not be easy in today's environment," Fred Burton, a former US state department counterterrorism expert, said but added it was difficult to determine without knowing all the facts of the case.

Richard Kuprewicz, a pipeline expert and president of Accufacts Inc., an energy consulting firm that focuses on pipelines and tank farms, said the force of the explosion would depend on the amount of fuel under pressure, but it would not travel up and down the line.

"That doesn't mean wackos out there can't do damage and cause a fire, but those explosions and fires are going to be fairly restricted," he said.

Since Defreitas retired from his job at the airport, security has significantly tightened and his knowledge of the operation was severely outdated.

Arraigned

Defreitas was arraigned on Saturday in federal court in Brooklyn, where he was held pending a bail hearing on Wednesday. His court-appointed lawyer, Drew Carter, told the judge that officials were not revealing the full story, according to reports from The New York Times and local television news station NY1.

Two other men, Abdul Kadir of Guyana and Kareem Ibrahim of Trinidad, were in custody in Trinidad, a Caribbean island. A fourth man, Abdel Nur of Guyana, was still being sought in Trinidad.

Trevor Paul, the top police official in Trinidad and Tobago, a twin-island nation off Venezuela's coast, said Kadir and Ibrahim would likely be extradited to the United States after court hearings in Trinidad.

Authorities said Kadir and Nur were longtime associates of a Trinidadian radical Muslim group, Jamaat al Muslimeen, which launched an unsuccessful rebellion in 1990 that left 24 dead.

Kadir, a former lawmaker in Guyana, was arrested in Trinidad for attempting to secure money for "terrorist operations," according to a Guyanese police commander who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Kadir left his position in Guyana's Parliament last year. Muslims make up about 9 percent of the former Dutch and British colony's 770,000 population, mostly from the Sunni sect.

Suspect's wife

Isha Kadir, the Guyanese suspect's wife, said her husband flew from Guyana to Trinidad on Thursday. She said her husband was arrested on Friday as he was boarding a flight from Trinidad to Venezuela, where he planned to pick up a travel visa to attend an Islamic religious conference in Iran.

"We have no interest in blowing up anything in the US," she said Saturday from the couple's home in Guyana. "We have relatives in the US."

The US Joint Terrorism Task Force recorded and staked put the men under surveillance, learning that Defreitas drove around and videotaped JFK on four occasions this past January.

When Defreitas returned from Guyana in February, US customs officials searched his belongings and found Kadir's name and telephone number in Defreitas' address book. At that time, Defreitas told an informant he was suspicious the US government was aware of the plot.

'Chicken Farm'

Authorities finally pounced after Defreitas said on May 27 that he was happy to see that the plan, code-named "Chicken Farm," was moving forward, according to the criminal complaint.

The pipeline, owned by Buckeye Pipeline Co., takes fuel from a facility in Linden, New Jersey, to the airport, about 50 kilometers east. Other lines service the other two main New York City area airports, LaGuardia Airport in Queens and Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey.

Buckeye spokesperson Roy Haase said the company, which moves petroleum through pipelines in a number of states, had been informed of the threat from the beginning but he declined to detail the company's security measures.

JFK and the area's other airports remained at a heightened state of alert on Saturday, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said.

Jeanie Mamo, a spokesperson for the White House, said President George W. Bush had been briefed and updated regularly as the investigation into the plot progressed.

"This case is a good example of international counterterrorism cooperation," Mamo said.

Homegrown plots

The arrests mark the latest in a series of alleged homegrown terrorism plots targeting high-profile American landmarks.

A year ago, seven men were arrested in what officials called the early stages of a plot to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago, which is the tallest US building, and destroy FBI offices and other buildings.

A month later, authorities broke up a plot to bomb underwater New York City train tunnels to flood lower Manhattan.

And six people were arrested a month ago in an alleged plot to unleash a bloody rampage on Fort Dix in New Jersey. *AP*

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Mindanao may win it for Zubiri ...

From page A1

The provinces are Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat and Surigao del Norte. Fraud allegedly attended the elections in these areas.

"We are praying and hoping that Recto and Zubiri can get enough votes there so they can make it [to the Top 12]," TU lawyer Romulo Macalintal told the INQUIRER by phone yesterday.

Before the Commission on Elections sitting as the National Board of Canvassers went on a weekend break in the absence of certificates of canvass to tabulate, Zubiri was in 13th place and Recto in 14th.

As of Saturday's tally, arrived at by the INQUIRER based on the tabulation of the NBC, Zubiri needed more than 191,395 votes to topple Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III of the Genuine Opposition (GO) from No. 12 and join the only two TU candidates—Joker Arroyo and Edgardo Angara—in the winning circle.

It was still 8-2-2 in favor of the GO.

Recto must get more than 399,489 votes to ease Pimentel out of the Magic 12.

Antonio Trillanes IV (GO), who clung to the 11th spot, was 461,843 and 669,937 votes ahead of Zubiri and Recto, respectively.

Zubiri and Recto have a chance of making it into the winning circle because Mindanao is a TU bailiwick, according to Macalintal.

"We hope they can make it because there are still two million votes out there. But I cannot just make any prediction as to the outcome of the voting [in the provinces]. Perhaps tomorrow (Monday) we will know," he said.

Canvassing resumes today

The NBC has yet to tabulate certificates of canvass (CoCs) from five Mindanao provinces, which have a total of 1.19 million registered voters.

Still to be tabulated are the CoCs from Basilan (181,447 registered voters), Lanao del Sur (396,800), Lanao del Norte (483,907), Sultan Kudarat (355,496) and Surigao del Norte (261,735). Canvassing will resume at 2 p.m. today.

The canvassing of the CoC from Maguindanao, which was submitted to the NBC on May 22, has been deferred after the board ruled that it was "statistically improbable" for 19 senatorial candidates to get zero votes in the province.

The Maguindanao CoC accounted for 337,108 registered voters, bringing the total number of registered voters in the six provinces to 2.016 million.

If 75 percent (average turnout nationwide) of the registered voters in these provinces actually cast their votes, only 1.54 million votes have yet to be tabulated.

The tally from Maguindanao was believed to be based on ballots that teachers had allegedly filled out under duress with the names of TU candidates to deliver a 12-0 sweep in favor of the administration slate.

The Comelec has created a task force to investigate the reported cheating.

Defend TU votes

As the canvassing of votes winds down, the Arroyo administration said it had every right to defend the votes of Zubiri and Recto, who had the best chances of entering the Magic 12.

Based on election returns and field reports, the TU candidates had a "strong chance" to be part of the winning circle, said Gabriel Claudio, President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser.

Claudio also cited the results of the exit poll conducted by Pulse Asia that showed that Zubiri and Recto were in the winning circle.

Exit poll

The Pulse Asia survey, Claudio noted, predicted that four TU candidates would make it into the Magic 12—Zubiri (8th to 12th place), Recto (9th to 12th), Joker Arroyo (8th to 11th) and Edgardo Angara (6th to 7th).

But Pulse Asia said that there was a statistical chance that the last four candidates on the list of most likely winners would be replaced by other senatorial candidates.

"What right has the opposition to say that any number above two for the administration is a result of vote manipulation or fraud?" Claudio said as he scoffed at the opposition's assertion that it was protecting the votes of the last three opposition candidates in the Magic 12.

"If they're protecting the vote of their last three candidates, it becomes even more urgent for us to defend the votes of our candidates that rightfully belong to the winning circle based on actual and natural election results," he said in a phone interview.

But he said that any effort made by the administration to win more seats "would only be done by protecting the natural votes for the administration and not through manipulation of the votes or through cheating."

Will of the electorate

"The true and natural will of the electorate will be reflected in the final vote or canvassing and we're hoping that we will have more seats," Claudio said.

While Ms Arroyo has conceded the senatorial race to the opposition, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita is leaving it to TU candidates the decision to admit defeat.

The President has recognized the GO's domination of the rankings in the winning circle. "Politics will not undo our economic progress," she said.

Namfrel count

In the count of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections, GO senatorial candidates continued to dominate the Magic 12, maintaining the party's 8-2-2 lead over TU and independent candidates.

Partial and unofficial results released on Saturday night by Namfrel showed Pimentel clinging to the final slot with a lead of more than 170,000 votes over 13th-placer Zubiri.

Namfrel has counted votes in 87.69 percent of the 224,748 precincts nationwide.

Remaining at No. 1 is Loren Legarda. She is followed by fellow GO candidates Francis Escudero (second), Panfilo Lacson (third) and Manuel Villar (fourth).

GO candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III has overtaken independent candidate Francis Pangilinan for the fifth spot, leading by just about 35,000 votes.

Completing the Magic 12 are Angara (seventh), GO's Alan Peter Cayetano (eighth), independent candidate Gregorio Honasan (ninth), Arroyo (10th) and Trillanes (11th).

With reports from Tarra Quismundo, TJ Burgonio and Cyril L. Bonabente

Comelec urged to probe poll regional chief

THE PARTY-LIST AKBAYAN YESterday urged the Commission on Elections to investigate Comelec regional director Ray Sumalipao for his alleged involvement in widespread party-list cheating in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

"Sumalipao, who was thrown into the spotlight for his vote-padding and -shaving activities during the time of former Comelec Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in 2004, is now apparently active in manipulating party-list results in the region," Akbayan president Ronald Llanes said at a press conference in Quezon City.

Outgoing Akbayan Rep. Etta Rosales said a copy of the certificate of canvass (CoC) of the municipality of Sultan Kudarat in Shariff Kabunsuan showed that Akbayan garnered 5,153 votes.

"However, when the provincial CoC was read out at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) on Saturday, we ended up with only 1,578 votes," Rosales said. *Margaux C. Ortiz and Jocelyn R. Uy*

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Education crisis deepens

From page A1

prepared to enter high school.

An analysis of the data showed that the level of proficiency of the Grade 6 students was only at Grade 4. When examined further, it was discovered that these students could not follow instructions and could not understand the questions well.

For years, says Abad, teachers who did not wish to be accused of incompetence gave "wholesale" passing marks.

In 2002, the late Education Secretary Raul Roco implemented a new basic curriculum. A product of years of study, it whittled down 10 subjects taught in the public schools to five—English, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and Filipino.

Art, Music, History, Physical Education and Culture were crammed under Social Studies.

PEOPLE rush to Binondo, Manila, to buy school supplies for their children in time for today's opening of classes. RYAN LIM

Goal is functional literacy

"The idea is to develop functional literacy," says former Education Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo, who took charge of the department for over a year after Abad quit in the midst of calls for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation over charges she stole the 2004 election.

"Every child should be a reader, functionally literate, be able to understand and apply in daily life the result of reading and numeracy," Hidalgo says.

Another issue that has come up of late was a legislative proposal—known as the Gullas bill—to use English as the medium of instruction, reversing the current bilingual policy (English and Filipino) in a bid to raise language proficiency.

Some schools have been experimenting with using the lingua franca of the region—there are 171 dialects across the country—in Grades 1 and 2 to increase the level of comprehension before going into the bilingual policy in Grade 3.

It is a costly exercise as it means translating all the dialects into English and Filipino. To go straightaway to English can be doubly taxing both to teachers who do not have the competency to teach it in the first place and the students who have no clue. Some experts say this should be done progressively, starting in Grade 3.

Dangerous legislation

"The problem is not poor English," says Juan Miguel Luz, president of the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and a former education undersecretary who calls the Gullas measure a "dangerous legislation."

"It is poor English, Science and Math skills. Weak English proficiency is not the sole determinant of poor overall achievement, it is merely a factor," he says, pointing out the Chinese or the Japanese will never throw out Mandarin or Nippongo in favor of the King's English.

Asked if she was satisfied with the Roco initiative to rouse the education system from its death throes, Hidalgo replies, "Of course not," citing a whole range of problems.

Among others, she cites education's allocation in the annual budget. Although it now comprises 13 percent of the pie—the biggest share—it still lags behind the budget allocation to education of neighboring countries, which is upward of 20 percent.

There are sectors critical of the new curriculum and want some changes.

Music is gone

Concert pianist Reynaldo Reyes, 73, grieves that music has been effectively scrapped from the school curriculum. He is critical of how music had been taught, which essentially was about organizing rondallas. But, he says, "at least, it was there."

The little time allowed for Physical Education has deprived the nation of a pool of athletes to choose from in fielding representatives to the Asian Games and the Olympics.

For a nation that has been left behind by its neighbors in manufacturing and agriculture, its services sector should be strengthened, experts say. But when call centers can only accept 10 applicants out of 100, there is something terribly wrong somewhere.

Without access to material wealth, the only way to social mobility is a good education and when even that is not available, the poor have no way out of the rut, says Arsenio Balisacan, director of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture based in Bangkok.

Pump-priming

The Arroyo administration in recent years has made huge investments in building and repairing schools to achieve its goal of providing free universal access to elementary and high school education.

It has been updating textbooks and teaching manuals, mobilizing resources from businessmen and private companies in exchange for tax incentives and tapping funds from international agencies.

In May 2006, Ms Arroyo authorized a "pump-priming program" to train and help teachers gain expertise in Mathematics and Science. Some 17,000 teachers entered the program initially last year, attending courses in summer or enrolling for regular semestral work.

Economics professor Edita A. Tan says the Roco curriculum is on the right track in reallocating of more time to them.

"The big question is how do we improve the teaching and learning of the core subjects," she says.

"There are teacher training activities but they are of limited reach. Remember that there are about 500,000 school teachers and only a few thousands go for summer training program," says Tan.

A summer will not do

"A summer of training will not produce English, Math, Science expertise. It takes time to achieve expertise in a field. Most of our Math and Science teachers have not majored in their teaching fields. They have to major in these fields to achieve competence to teach them," she says.

Tan says another problem is that very few universities and colleges produce quality teachers.

Just the cost of training people who will train the teachers is staggering, say DepEd officials.

Secretary Jesli Lapus has devoted most of his time since he was appointed to the helm of DepEd in August year planning to fast-track projects to improve learning facilities and teacher training.

"You have to think out of the box," says Lapus, a three-term congressman and former banker.

Learning via satellite

Lapus is in the midst of negotiations with China to provide initially half of the 50,000 schools nationwide 10 television sets each to receive learning materials to be transmitted via satellite.

Another of his priority projects is to design a program for legislation that will address the skills and jobs mismatch in the employment market. It's the paradox of a surplus of graduates that cannot fill half a million waiting jobs.

(See story on Page A1.)

Lapus repeatedly talks of encouraging high school graduates who cannot immediately afford a college education to go to technical and vocational schools and at least be assured there will be a job waiting for them at any point in their studies.

It is a program that has been successfully implemented in the United States and Europe for high school graduates who cannot pass college entrance examinations.

There's still a long way to go, but there are determined moves to reach the goal of improving education one tortured step at a time.

"We're getting into the heart of the systems breakdown," says Lapus.

Be ready for rains, DepEd tells students

EDUCATION SECRETARY Jesli Lapus advised students to prepare for rainshowers when schools open today, following a notice from the weather bureau that the southwest monsoon or "*habagat*" had set in.

"The latest weather forecast from Pagasa (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) requires all students to be ready for downpours on opening day," he said.

Lapus said this meant that students not only should bring raincoats and umbrellas, "they should also try to leave their homes early so they can get to school on time since the traffic situation is normally adversely affected by heavy rains."

He said children going to school in the morning "will not be so much affected since the weather forecast shows that the rains and thunderstorms will be in the afternoon or evening."

Satellite TV beams hope to classrooms in countryside

From page A1

that would put up a television channel with educational programs geared toward public schools," Nuval says.

Since its inception in 1999, Knowledge Channel has been servicing 1,719 schools in the country—with roughly 20 percent connected via satellite and the rest through cable.

Nuval says that while Japan and Australia have their own government-run educational television, she has yet to come across a version similar to the Philippine model.

"In the United States, there is an agreement between cable operators to put educational programming in their channel lineup. However, Knowledge Channel is still unique with its 18-hour continuous programming," Nuval says.

The shows are anchored on the Department of Education's curriculum for both the elementary and high school levels.

"We tell the teachers that all our programs are based on what we call minimum learning competencies—or the minimum a child must learn in any grade or year level," says Nuval.

All programs have been previewed by the DepEd, says Nuval. Based on the foundation's 10-year agreement with DepEd, mandatory viewing should be implemented in all schools installed with Knowledge Channel infrastructure.

Guaranteed improvement

"If a child watches regularly, we almost guarantee that his or her achievement levels in the different subject areas will go up," she says.

Nuval says that after the installation of the needed infrastructure, such as a satellite dish and television set, the school comes up with its own viewing program for its students.

"They could choose among the different subject areas, and we replay the episodes so the school could decide what viewing time is convenient for each grade or year level," she says.

She says that while Filipino programs, such as *Sineskwela* (school theater) and *Math-tinik* (Math savvy), are popular in the remote areas, schools in urban areas choose programs administered in English.

"We monitor the schools for two years after we have installed the infrastructure to make sure that they use it properly," says Nuval.

Teachers are trained on how to use television as an instructional tool and taught how to prepare lesson plans even without watching the programs beforehand.

Technology now a must

Nuval says technology has become indispensable in leveling the teaching and learning fields in a country where achieving education goals has been a big challenge.

"In the education sector, technology is no longer an option. We should embrace it," she says.

Nuval says the foundation has been focusing on a bigger, more alarming problem: the public school teachers' lack of knowledge and skills.

She recalls the appalling results of a diagnostics test conducted for teachers in Mindanao, where she had been assigned to head a Knowledge Channel team.

About 85 percent of the teachers were found to have only fifth grade level skills. In some schools, some teachers were even diagnosed to match the knowledge and skills of a grade three student.

"We feel that these teachers learn as much from the episodes as the students. It is an unfortunate observation that the teachers, at least in the areas where I was assigned, are as amazed as their wards whenever we turn a television set on," Nuval says.

Teachers in some areas in Mindanao have not received training in the last 20 years. She recalls an incident in Tongkil, Sulu.

"I saw this teacher, in his 40s, sitting at the base of the school flagpole, sobbing," Nuval says.

When Nuval asked the teacher why he was crying, he told her that he could not imagine how they were able to reach their island—which took the Knowledge Channel team seven hours to reach by motorboat—and that he was very grateful for their help.

TV brings students in

In some schools in remote areas, enrolment rates have gone up—with the television programs serving as a magnet for curious children. Nuval adds the rates of absences in the Mindanao area have also gone down.

"We also have to deal with schools using the television as a babysitter for their students," she says. These facilities usually do not have enough teachers, as in the case of a school in Sultan Mastura in Maguindanao, where there were only two teachers for a student population of 320.

Nuval cites the responses the foundation has been receiving.

"There are countless schools requesting us to provide them with infrastructure and Knowledge Channel educational programs. We just could not cope with the requests because funds (from donors) are not coming in as fast as we'd like them to," Nuval laments.

She says the DepEd's P26-billion cybereducation program, which aims to tap the Internet to expand its alternative learning system, would have the same impact as the Knowledge Channel.

"At the same time, it would render us extinct. I've been trying to contact the DepEd officials to suggest that they tap us for input because we have been in the business for seven years now," Nuval says.

Cebu produces graduates for IT firms

From page A1

ates finding work, with many ending up in jobs unrelated to their IT degrees.

The academe and the private sector tended to blame each other for the dismal situation.

But when the concerned groups got together during the landmark summit, they realized they were better off cooperating with each other. Representatives from all the sectors involved in the ICT industry then sat down and forged a memorandum of agreement in 2001.

The agreement bound the academe, industry, government and nongovernment organizations to the task of ensuring the quantity and upgrading the quality of ICT graduates. This would require putting together a curriculum for the ICT schools that would be responsive to the needs of the private sector.

Industry representatives included printer manufacturer Lexmark Research and Development Corp. and software developer Infoweapons.

The academic institutions included the Cebu Institute of Technology, University of San Carlos and the University of the Philippines Visayas Cebu College.

The Cebu local government likewise lent its full support, as did civil society organizations, such as the Aboitiz Group Foundation Inc. and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Cebu's dream

The groups agreed that by working together, they could raise the quality of Cebu's ICT workforce and fulfill the city's vision of becoming a hub for both the high-end software programming and IT-enabled services, such as the business process outsourcing industry.

The curriculum prepared by the different stakeholders—including the academe and the private sector—was then adopted by almost all member schools that signed up for the program.

"The schools agreed to adopt a common syllabus and nomenclature. It took a lot of effort but it was done," Belen said.

Subjects deemed irrelevant by the private sector were stricken off the curriculum, while subjects on new disciplines, such as the latest in software programming languages, were inserted.

Also guiding the groups in formulating the curriculum was the results of a human resource survey on ICT services done by CEDF-IT in 2002.

Taking care of teachers

It showed that of the 2,200 graduates produced by the colleges and universities, only 100 to 300 were appropriately employed, meaning they found a job related to the course they took up.

"It was apparent then that there was a serious mismatch between the available jobs and graduates, between the supply and the demand," Belen said.

To get the right students, the CEDF-IT took care of the teachers through the IT Teachers Academy in 2002.

Belen said teachers fielded by the member-schools are provided months of training to upgrade their skills, which they can share with future students.

There is an agreement among the private firms in the CEDF-IT not to hire these teachers for their own businesses, no matter how qualified they are, because they are more valuable passing on their knowledge to students, he said.

To determine if the CEDF-IT model was fulfilling its objectives, another survey was conducted on the ICT industry last year.

It showed that of the 2,200 graduates, 600 were now qualified to work in the ICT and IT-enabled services sectors, compared to just 300 during the 2002 survey.

It was enough to encourage the CEDF-IT members to say they were on the right track.

Growing reputation

"One of the main reasons why CEDF-IT works is that everybody agreed we should not shoot ourselves in the foot by not seeing the process through. The members are committed to seeing it work," he said.

He also gave credit to the support of the local government units, which allowed the CEDF-IT the freedom to implement its flagship programs.

The CEDF-IT, however, is not about to rest on its laurels since there are still not enough graduates to fill the available jobs.

Belen said the industry was demanding a minimum of 1,500 new workers—and the number has kept growing as Cebu enhances its reputation as an ICT and IT-enabled services hub.

Fortunately, the CEDF-IT has been attracting more members from the academe, private sector, civil society and even government.

Now on its sixth year, the CEDF-IT has more than 100 members, with Teletech, Convergys and Sun Micrsosystems being among the more recent ones.

Another vision

The CEDF-IT board of trustees today include Stan G. Combs, president of Lexmark Research and Development Corp.; Francis O. Monera, president of Cebu Property ventures and Development Corp.; Lawrence E. Hughes, chief technology officer of InfoWeapons; Sabino R. Dapat, president of Mitsubishi Motors; and Jose Mari T. Bigornia, president of the College of Technological Sciences.

The commitment of the private sector means more resources to enhance the flagship programs of teacher training, human resource monitoring and professional certification in IT, such as Java or Oracle.

Belen said another vision of CEDF-IT was to share its successes—and challenges—with other local governments faced with similar problems of matching their graduates' skills with industry demands.

He said the Iloilo Foundation for Information Technology had been in close contact to replicate the CEDF-IT model in Iloilo.

"To scale up and institutionalize the CEDF-IT model is one of our objectives because the ICT industry is growing, not just here but abroad, and the Philippines can take advantage of that growth," he said.

SERGIO OSMEÑA
Speaker de la Asamblea Filipina, 1907

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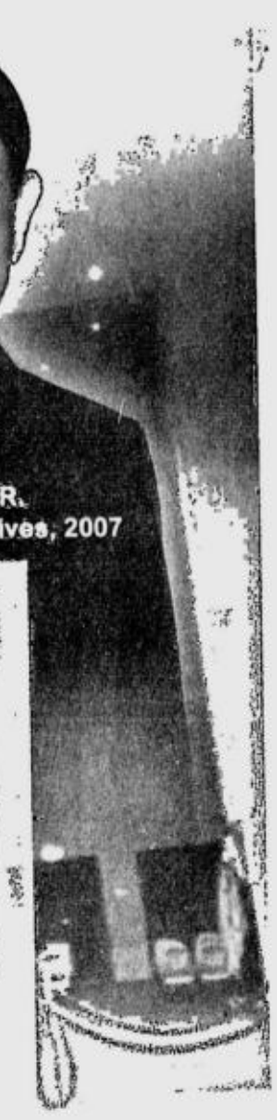
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JOSE C. DE VENECIA JR.
Speaker, House of Representatives, 2007

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, the first national legislature, the Philippine Assembly, was inaugurated at the Manila Grand Opera House. Secretary of War William Howard Taft, as representative of U. S. President Theodore Roosevelt, reaffirmed the American purpose and hopes for Filipinos. The Assembly's inaugural session followed at the Marble Hall of the Ayuntamiento Building in Intramuros.

As the "child of the Revolution" and Southeast Asia's first national parliament, the Assembly of 80 members, elected in the first national elections in July 1907, made independence its noblest cause and bequeathed its transcendent task of building the nation to its successor, the House of Representatives. Our people have since moved from war to peace, from colonial rule to political independence, from conflict to consensus, and from factionalism to genuine nationhood.

"This seminal event ushered in a series of successful nationalist and independence movements in colonial Asia and Africa," four-term Speaker Jose de Venecia, the longest-serving House leader in post-war Philippine history, said.

Today, in a global community of nations, the House of Representatives has taken the lead in promoting seminal causes: the Asia-wide Asian Parliamentary Assembly, joined by Pakistan, Iran, Thailand and Indonesia—and the ASEAN Parliamentary Assembly for Southeast Asia jointly with Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia; the global Christian-Muslim Interfaith Dialogue; and the global debt-for-equity program to convert 50 percent of the debt of some 100 nations into equity in mass housing, reforestation, food production, irrigation, health care and clean environment in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, foremost of which is to reduce poverty in half by 2015. The UN General Assembly has approved both initiatives, and the debt-for-equity program is awaiting action by the G-8 nations and the Paris Club.

On this centennial year we, the Members of this House of Representatives, the inheritors of this proud tradition, rededicate ourselves to the continuing task of transforming the nation, tapping as always into our people's fervent idealism and hopes. In this task we invoke the Philippine Assembly's triumphs, achievements and trials as the bastion of our representative democracy, and pray for God's infinite blessings upon all our strivings.

One hundred years of building the nation

PHILIPPINE ASSEMBLY, 1907-1916

SERGIO OSMEÑA
1907-1910; 1910-1912; 1912-1916; 1916-1919; 1919-1922

- Osmeña Retirement Law starts Filipinization by giving American public officials incentives to retire
- Gabaldon Law builds schools in *barrios* nationwide
- Bureau of Labor holds employers responsible for workers' safety
- The Philippine National Bank is created, providing commercial credit
- Gov't purchases friar lands, sells them on installment
- Gov't organizes US-style civil service and courts
- Gov't allots funds for new infrastructure

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1916-1935

MANUEL A. ROXAS
1922-1925; 1925-1927 1928-1930; 1931-1933

QUINTIN B. PAREDES
1933-1935

GIL M. MONTILLA
1935-1938

JOSE Y. YULO
1939-1941

- Philippine Autonomy Bill provides for a bicameral legislature
- Concurrent resolution accepts the Tydings-McDuffie Act for Philippine independence
- Law granting women the right to vote passed in 1933 .
- The 1935 Constitution is ratified, mandates elections for the Commonwealth government

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMONWEALTH, 1935-1941

- Supreme Court is reorganized, judiciary Filipinized, the Court of Appeals created
- National Economic Council, forerunner of the National Economic and Development Authority, is created
- Court of Industrial Relations settles labor disputes, recognizes workers' right to unionize
- The Institute of National Language develops, adopts national language
- Land reform authorizes the President to order expropriations and acquire portions of large estates used as homesites by bonafide beneficiaries
- Public Land Act nationalizes land acquisition by denying non-Filipinos the right to acquire land
- The National Power Corporation is created to tap cheap electric power, hydroelectric and other power sources
- Anti-Dummy Law fosters economic nationalism
- The Agricultural Tenancy Act creating the Court of Agrarian Reform addresses agrarian unrest
- A liberalized Rural Bank Act gives rise to a hundred private rural banks
- Spanish-era *cedula* or poll tax is discontinued

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 1943-1944

BENIGNO S. AQUINO SR.
1943-1944

The Japanese Occupation replaces the Philippine Commonwealth with a Military Administration, pressures Filipino leaders to establish a civil administration—the Philippine Executive Commission—to increase food production, rebuild war-damaged infrastructure, restore peace and order, and induce guerrillas to surrender. Acts passed during this period were deemed invalid and not binding.

JOSE C. ZULUETA
1945-1945

EUGENIO P. PEREZ
1946; 1946-1949; 1949-1953

JOSE B. LAUREL JR.
1954-1957; 1967-1969 1970-1971

DANIEL Z. ROMUALDEZ
1958-1961; 1962-1962

CORNELIO T. VILLAREAL
1962-1965; 1966-1967 1971-1972

QUERUBE C. MAKALINTAL
1978-1984

NICANOR E. YÑIGUEZ
1984-1986

RAMON V. MITRA
1987-1992

THE RESTORED COMMONWEALTH, & THE THIRD REPUBLIC, 1945-1972

- Economic rehabilitation includes returning PNB's capital stock to its pre-war figure of P10 million
- The government is authorized to participate in the IMF and IBRD
- House concurs with President Roxas' amnesty for collaborators during the Occupation
- Filipinos are given preference in the lease of public market stalls
- Central Bank Bill maintains monetary stability
- Teaching of Spanish is made obligatory in all schools
- Labor is banned on Sundays, Christmas, New Year, Holy Thursday and Good Friday
- House members declare their statements of assets and liabilities for transparency
- The *Noli* and *Fili* are made compulsory reading in schools despite the Catholic Church's opposition
- House backs President Garcia's "Filipino First" policy
- The Communist Party of the Philippines is outlawed

THE INTERIM AND REGULAR BATASANG PAMBANSA, 1978-1986

- The metric system is defined and implemented
- *Batasan* is affiliated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Residential rentals are stabilized and regulated
- Issuance of bouncing checks is penalized

Eighth Congress, 1987-1992

- Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law
- Local Government Code of 1991 dramatically expands local autonomy
- Plunder is defined and penalized
- Free High School Education Act gives poor greater access to education
- Generic Act reduces cost of medicines
- Code of conduct for public officials
- The PNP is established
- Trafficking mail-order Filipina brides to foreign nationals is made illegal

Ninth Congress, 1992-1995

- The first health insurance law provides free hospitalization, giving benefits to more than 65 million Filipinos
- Bases Conversion and Development Act helps convert Clark and Subic into free ports and economic zones, and Fort Bonifacio into a satellite city
- The Anti-Subversion Law is repealed
- VAT is restructured, widens tax base to raise revenues
- Entry and scope of foreign banks is liberalized
- President Ramos is given emergency powers to resolve power crisis
- The Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council is constituted to prioritize key legislation
- High-Value Crops Development Act diversifies crops and increases farmers' income
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, OFW Act and Party-list System are strengthened
- Armed Forces Modernization Law

JOSE C. DE VENECIA JR.
1992-1995; 1995-1998; 2001-2004; 2004-2007

Tenth Congress, 1995-1998

(The Ninth Congress and Tenth Congress, from 1992 to 1998, passed 228 economic, financial, and social reform laws, creating the modest Philippine economic miracle.)

- Oil Deregulation/Downstream Oil Industry Deregulation Acts stabilize oil prices
- Intellectual Property Code protects against piracy
- Tax Reform Act increases exemptions, allows decreasing corporate tax rate
- Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act allots P120 billion for productivity
- Financing Company Act allows 60 % foreign ownership in financial companies
- Anti-Rape Law classifies rape as crime against persons, not against chastity
- Paternity Leave allows parents seven days leave besides sick and vacation leaves
- Hospitals and medical clinics refusing to attend to emergency cases are penalized
- Act sets first computerized elections in 1996 in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao
- Comelec is authorized to use the automated system in the May 1998 elections

Eleventh Congress, 1998-2001

- Solo Parents Welfare Act

MANUEL B. VILLAR JR.
1998-2000

ARNULFO P. FUENTEBELLA
2000-2001

FELICIANO R. BELMONTE, JR.
2001-2001

- Electronic Commerce Act prepares the Philippines for globalization
- Anti-Dumping Act
- Seat Belts Use Act
- Philippine Clean Air Act combats air pollution

Twelfth Congress, 2001-2004

- Anti-Trafficking of Persons Act
- Philippine Clean Water Act
- Anti-Money Laundering Act
- Overseas Absentee Voting Act and Dual Citizenship Act benefit eight million Filipinos worldwide
- Government Procurement Reform Act improves transparency
- Electric Power Industry Reform Act reduces power rates, restores the Napocor to financial health
- Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act curtails the growing drug menace
- Anti-Abuse of Women in Intimate Relationships Act

Thirteenth Congress, 2004-2007

- The Anti-Terrorism law (Human Security Ac) fights terrorism and promotes stability
- EVAT is enacted, creating an economic breakthrough and a movement towards a balanced budget, strengthening the peso, and making funds available for development
- Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act protects minors in conflict with the law
- Personal Equity and Retirement Account Law mandates retirement savings
- Package of tax reform laws is passed to improve collection, prevent tax evasion, open new revenue sources
- Death penalty is outlawed, hailed by the world
- Bio-ethanol Fuel Act develops alternative fuel sources

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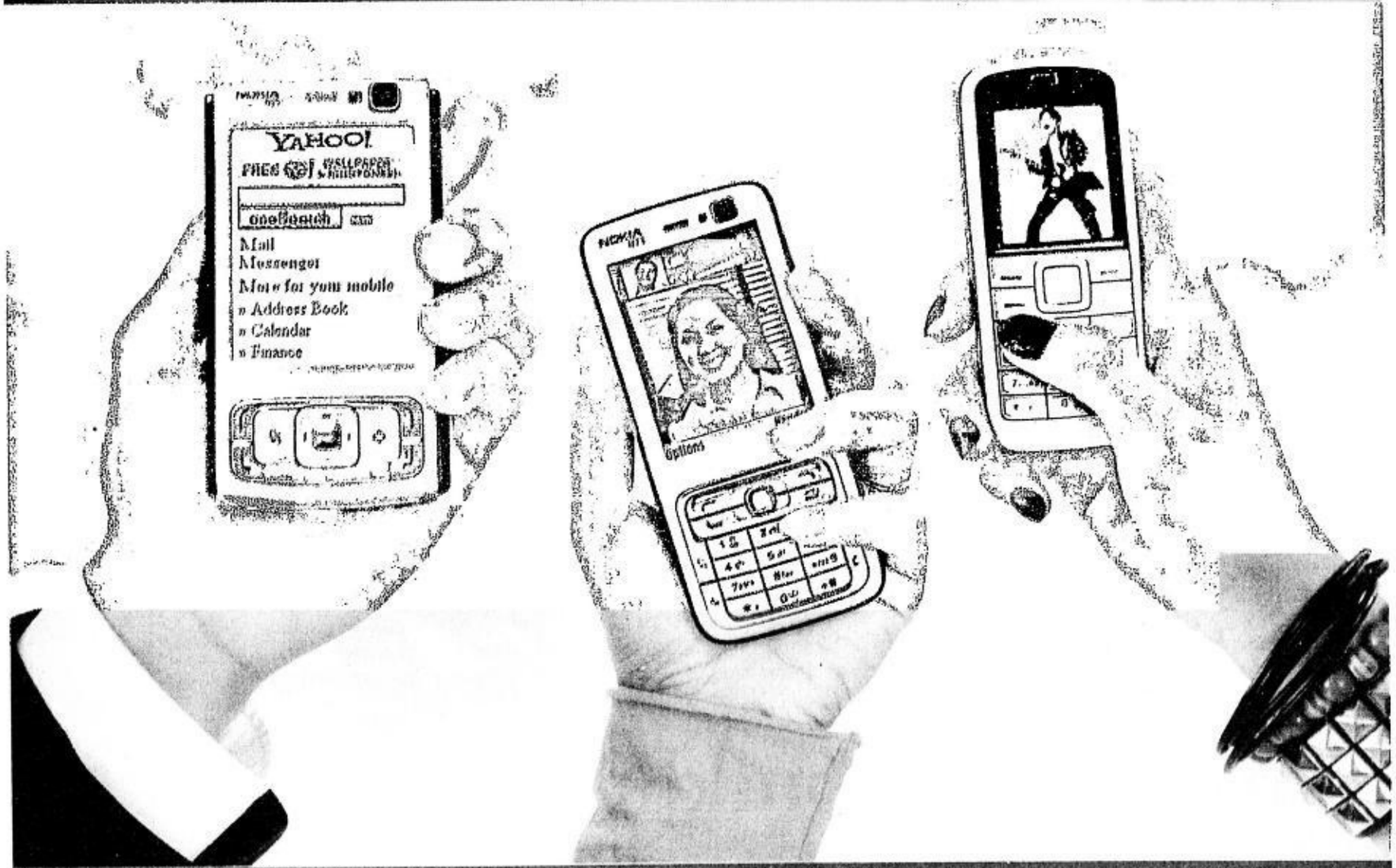

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Ginebra gains playoff

SMB comes to Kings' aid

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Alaska vs Barangay Ginebra

EVEN KINGS NEED HELP from a big sister.

San Miguel Beer rallied from an early double-digit deficit with a lethal display of force in the crunch last night to pound out a 105-99 victory over Talk 'N Text at the Araneta Coliseum.

And with that victory, the Beermen ushered sister team Barangay Ginebra straight into a playoff battle for the second outright semifinal berth against Alaska on Wednesday.

For a while, it looked like the 121-116 victory by the Gin Kings over Air21 in the first game would go to naught, as the Beermen fell behind, 0-11 and by 13 points twice in the third period.

San Miguel Beer forged a playoff with the Express with the win, as they ended up tied for fifth spot with 11-7 cards, a win behind the 12-6 records of the Kings and the idle Alaska Aces, who slug it out for the No. 2 spot on Wednesday.

Red Bull, the defending champion here, made the semifinals ahead of everyone else after a 105-103 decision of Coca-Cola last week gave the Bulls a 13-5 card to end their elimination round campaign.

More stories on A31 to 36

Galen Young tossed in 26 points, grabbed 15 rebounds and had seven assists in taking over the game for the team.

"He's a really smart player," coach Siot Tanquingcen later said of Young. "He knows what was at stake (in this game) and he put it upon himself to be more assertive (offensively)."

Two playoff games will be held on Wednesday, with San Miguel Beer and Air21 clashing for the No. 5 spot and the last automatic quarterfinal berth. The loser of this match will slide down to the wild-card phase and face the No. 9 team, Sta. Lucia.

Talk 'N Text will have to content itself with an automatic quarterfinal berth, which is what the loser of the Alaska-Barangay Ginebra playoff will get. The winner in this pairing will join the Bulls in a break that could run up to close to four weeks.

Wesley Gonzales came off the bench in the second half to hit 12 points, completing a three-point play off Harvey Carey with 3:19 left to give the Beermen a 93-89 lead.

Young had earlier hit a layup over two defenders that gave the Beermen the lead for the first time, 90-89, with 3:42 left. That culminated an almost game-long fight-back by San Miguel, which trailed, 49-62 in the third.

Earlier, Rod Nealy and Ronald Tubid completed double-doubles to put Ginebra in position for a playoff for an outright semifinal berth.

Nealy had 35 points and 13 boards, while Tubid matched his career-high of 30 and snared 12 rebounds to lead the Kings.

The scores:

GINEBRA 121—Nealy 35, Tubid 30, Menk 22, Mamaril 10, Abarrientos 6, Salvacion 5, Santos R. 5, Echavez 4, Seigle 4, Macapagal 0, Holper 0.

AIR21 116—Canaleta 28, Daniels 22, Santos A. 21, Arboleda 16, Telan 13, Dimaunahan 11, Se 3, Torion 2, Andaya 0.

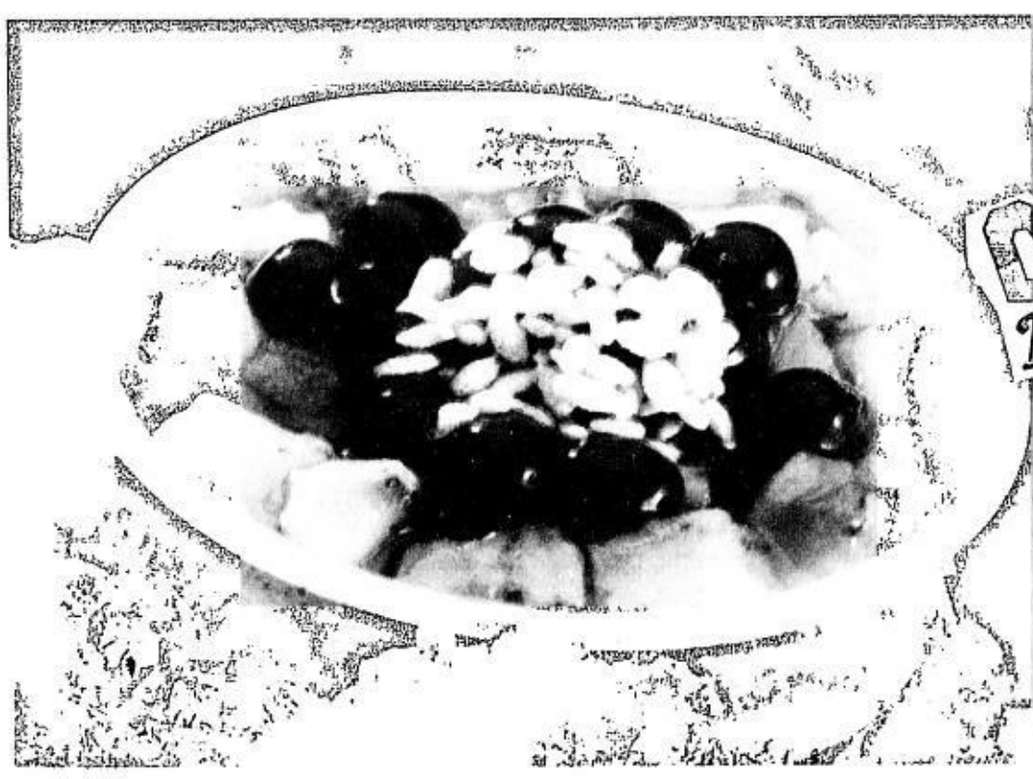
Quarters: 37-27, 65-60, 97-88 121-116

Second Game

SAN MIGUEL 105—Young 26, Ildefonso 22, Gonzales 12, Calaguio 12, Racela 10, Tenorio 8, Villanueva 7, Pena 5, Espinas 3, Wilson 0, Cablay 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 99—De Ocampo 21, Cardona 19, Carey 16, Sullinger 15, Washington 14, Billones 7, Belano 6, Allado 1, Fran 0, Pablo 0.

Quarters: 21-26, 46-54, 73-76, 105-99



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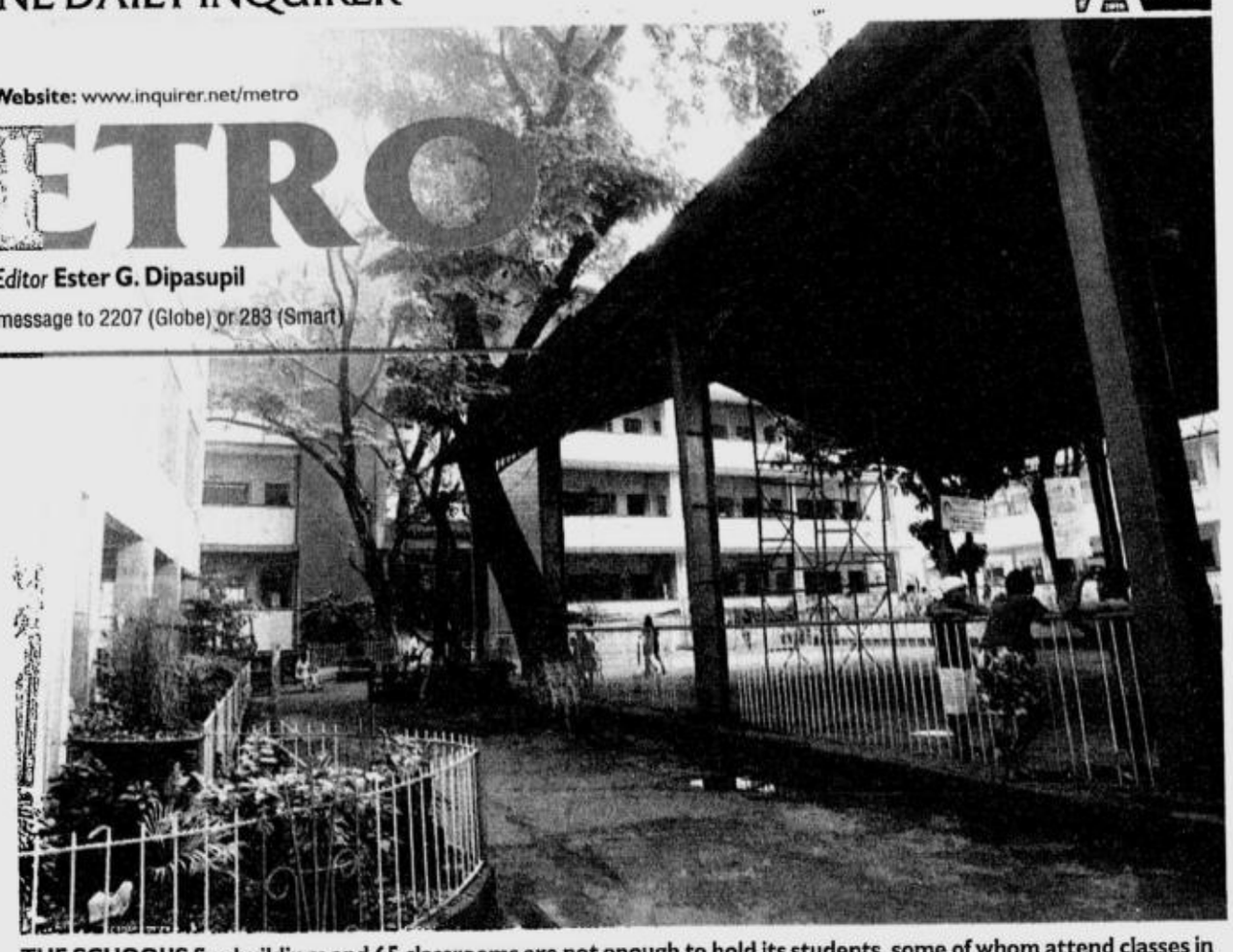
65 TO 70 STUDENTS PER ROOM

Classroom lack still QC school's biggest problem



THE SCHOOL'S five buildings and 65 classrooms are not enough to hold its students, some of whom attend classes in makeshift rooms set up in corridors.

PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH 13,000 STUDENTS EXPECTED TO PASS through its gates on Monday, Commonwealth Elementary School is, without doubt, the grade school with the biggest student population in Quezon City.

Suffering from an alarming lack of classrooms which can barely accommodate the swelling number of enrollees every year, the school has one ray of hope to look forward to—a new school building courtesy of the city government.

"The new structure will add 18 more classrooms to the school, decongesting the other buildings," Dr. Elisa Francia, the school principal, happily informed the INQUIRER.

Francia said the school, which has five buildings and 65 classrooms, has been struggling to provide for the educational needs of children which come from as near as the Commonwealth area to as far as Fairview in the city's second district.

Most of the school's students, according to Francia, live in depressed areas. Their parents are laborers, informal settlers or vendors selling their wares in the nearby market or in the streets.

"Every year, the student population seems to increase, making it more difficult for us to provide more classrooms for them," Francia said, stressing that the school—just like any public school in the country—has an "accept all" policy, requiring them to accommodate all students whether they had paid for their tuition or not.

She said they accepted 12,700 students last year, only 300 less than this school year's enrollees.

On top of this, the school's accessibility has made it attractive to low-income families whose houses are only one jeepney ride away from the school, according to the principal.

Francia said the new school building would be completed by mid-June or early July. In the meantime, they would have to make do with the rooms they have, which, to begin with, is not a lot.

"We accommodate as much as 65 to 70 children per classroom," Francia said. She added that for some selected grade levels, classes have to be held in three shifts instead of the usual two because of the lack of classrooms.

CLASSROOM/ A26

DID YOU KNOW

ESTABLISHED in June 1907 as the Centro Escolar de Señoritas, Centro Escolar University in Manila was founded by Librada Avelino and Carmen de Luna as a nationalistic center of learning for Filipino women. Its first college, Pharmacy, opened in 1921, and was followed by the Colleges of Liberal Arts, Education, Dentistry and Optometry. The school was granted university status in 1932.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

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600 soldiers 'invade' Metro public schools

By Christine O. Avendaño

MILITARY TROOPS WERE BACK IN METRO Manila last Saturday but only to help public school officials prepare for the opening of classes today.

Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' National Capital Region Command (NCRCom), said the other day that he joined 600 of his men in a massive one-day cleanup of 16 schools in the cities of Manila, Quezon, Malabon, Caloocan and Taguig.

"We were there just to clean school grounds and prepare the facilities in time for the school opening," Dolorfino said in a phone interview.

He added that it was his command's second time to participate in the activity following a request from the Department of Education.

Painting and repairing

On May 26, his troops painted and repaired classrooms in a school in Payatas, Quezon City and another one in Bicutan, Dolorfino said.

At the Rosa Susanno Elementary School in Barangay Gulod in Novaliches, Quezon City, his men helped demolished a school building. Some of the materials taken from the structure, he added, were used in repairing school chairs.

He said his troops worked side by side with school authorities, parents and teachers' associations and community leaders.

Awaiting decision

According to Dolorfino, he expects Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon to decide this week whether or not to redeploy soldiers to poor barangays in Metro Manila.

Military soldiers stayed in 26 barangays in Metro Manila for six months doing civil action works until they were pulled out before the May 14 polls.

Their presence were opposed by militant groups which accused them of campaigning against leftist party-list groups, a charge that military and government officials denied.

AFP officials, however, acknowledged that the soldiers were in the slums to counter the recruitment efforts of communist insurgents and terrorist groups.

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44 June brides to be wed in mass ceremony

By DJ Yap

FORTY-FOUR COUPLES WILL EXchange vows today at the Makati City Hall as part of the local government's twice-yearly free mass wedding for partners living out of wedlock.

The mass wedding, dubbed "Kasalan sa Makati" will be held at the quadrangle with reelected Mayor Jejomar Binay and his wife, Elenita, serving as principal sponsors to the grooms and brides.

To be officiated by Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado, the civil wedding, a project of the Museum and Cultural Affairs Office, will begin at 4 p.m. with the signing of the marriage certificate to be held an hour earlier.

"Kasalan" is a program open to all live-in couples who reside in the city. They can avail of the program if they have been living together for at least five years, with or without children.

Other requirements include a marriage license, individual birth, barangay and community tax certificates.

On the day of the mass wedding, participating couples are required to follow the dress code: A white long-sleeved shirt or "barong" and dark pants for the groom, and a white dress with head crown for the bride.

They should also bring their own wedding rings. But the bridal bouquets come free, courtesy of the city government.

METROBRIEFS

House thieves strike

SUSPECTED members of the Akyat Bahay Gang ran off with a loot of more than P400,000 in separate incidents over the weekend in Manila. Billy Gabriel, 61, of Fable Estates in Sta. Ana, told the police that he lost around P300,000 worth of cash and jewelry after his house was ransacked at around 3:30 a.m. yesterday. Gabriel said the robbers sawed off the grills of his window. He added that his neighbors spotted a suspect but failed to collar him because he was carrying a gun. The businessman said he and his wife lost a white-gold ring studded with diamonds worth $3,700, ladies' jewelry priced at P42,000, and P35,000 and $170 in cash. He said it was the third time his house was robbed despite changing locks and beefing up security. The day before, thieves broke into an apartment on Sobriedad Street in Manila, where victims Josephine Trinidad, a customer development manager, and Ivy Ann Atienza, a sales associate, resided. The women said they lost a laptop computer worth P100,000, a digital camera, P36,000 in cash, credit cards and other important documents.

Allison W. Lopez

Police prepared

POLICEMEN IN the eastern part of the metropolis are all set for today's opening of the school year with the deployment of police officers, traffic enforcers and civilian volunteers to key sections of the district, Eastern Police District (EPD) director, Chief Supt. Luizo Ticman, said yesterday. The EPD is composed of the municipality of San Juan, and the cities of Marikina, Mandaluyong, and Pasig City. Ticman said there are nearly 200 schools in the area. The EPD chief added that they have deployed a total of 800 police personnel to school areas to increase police visibility and patrols. In San Juan, Supt. Rodelio Jocson said they expect heavy traffic in the Greenhills area, where the road is under construction and where schools such as the De La Salle Green Hills and Xavier Academy are located.

Kristine L. Alave

6 suspects in mail-order bride scam charged

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION has filed charges against six people, including two Koreans, for allegedly exploiting young Filipino women through their mail-order bride business.

The six were identified as Seung Han-lee and Moo Hwan-lee, both Korean nationals and temporarily residing at Milyang Hotel and Restaurant, Valdez Street, San Miguel Village, Makati City; Susana Obano, Girlie Alayon, Jane Mahusay and Marlene Ambasan.

According to the NBI, the six were charged with violating the Mail Order Bride Law, or Republic Act No. 6955.

Investigation showed that prior to the suspects' arrest, authorities were tipped off in April that a group of Koreans and some Filipinos were allegedly enticing young girls to marry visiting Korean nationals.

The girls' families were promised 100,000 in cash while the "brides" were assured of a bright future once they set foot in Korea, the NBI said.

After conducting surveillance operations, agents set up an entrapment operation which resulted in five of the suspects' arrest at the Milyang Hotel as they were introducing prospective brides to two Koreans.

The special law against mail-order brides signed by former President Corazon Aquino on June 13, 1990, makes it unlawful for anybody to match up Filipino women for marriage to foreigners through mail-order and other similar practices.

This includes inviting a Filipino woman to become a member of a club whose objective is to match them up with foreigners who want to marry for a fee.

2 houses lost in Pasig fire

By Kristine L. Alave

A BLAZE BURNED DOWN TWO houses in Barangay Karangalan, Pasig City yesterday morning, the city's fire department reported.

F01 Salvador Norberte, fire investigator, said initial investigation showed that the blaze may have originated in the second floor of the house owned by Noel Villafuerte at 2618 Kaalinsabay St., Barangay Karangalan.

The fire quickly spread to the first floor of the house, which contained clothes and flammable materials, before it engulfed the house beside it which was owned by Ignacio Lopez.

Norberte estimated the damage to property from the fire at about P300,000.

The fire department said they received a call from the area at 6:35 a.m. The fire was put out about an hour later, the report said. No one was reported hurt or killed in the incident.

Norberte said they have yet to establish the cause of the blaze as both Villafuerte and Lopez denied that the fire started in their houses.

The official added that fire probers would also get the victims' statements and talk to other witnesses.

OFFENSIVE 'ART'

From Zusie Timbol of Quezon City: "I am extremely bothered by the presence of malicious stickers, paintings and graffiti found in jeepneys plying the Cogeo-Cubao (Quezon City) and vice versa route. I photographed this jeepney with plate number NYD 202, in particular, to show your readers what I mean. The painting on this jeepney's body shows what appears to be a motorcycle transformed into a sexy woman with a man riding on it. Are there any regulations regarding the use of these types of offensive 'art' that offend the sensibilities of commuters, motorists and pedestrians?"

Are these cops blind?

"BULAG yata ang mga pulis sa Avenida. Harap-harapan sumisinghot ng rugby ang mga bata. Di nila hinuhuli sa harap ng LRT!" (Policemen stationed on Rizal Avenue must be blind. Children high on rugby do their thing right under their noses. These kids who are loitering in front of the LRT station are never caught!)

BOY SAROZA, 48, Sta. Cruz, Manila

Insensitive to traffic mess

SINCE the SM mall opened at San Lazaro, passenger jeepneys are parked or double parked everywhere, obstructing the flow of traffic. They are also public safety hazards, especially to pedestrians. Traffic aides and policemen are often seen in the area but appear to be insensitive to the chaos around them. I don't want to wish bad karma on those responsible for the mess, but I feel so helpless most of the time that I can't help but do so.

JUN SANTOS, 43, San Lazaro, Manila

At wit's end

HORRIBLE traffic conditions start at 4 a.m on a daily basis at Recto Avenue corner Soler Street in Divisoria, right in front of Mercury drugstore because of a passenger jeepney terminal in the area. When can we motorists and pedestrians get any relief from all these?

DAVE, 21, Tondo, Manila

Illegal vendors, illegal terminal

COMMONWEALTH Avenue (now Don Mariano Marcos Avenue) from Luzon Avenue to Tandang Sora Avenue is full of sidewalk vendors and illegal jeepney terminals. No one seems to be doing anything about it.

ED RECHETA, 56, Sauyo, Novaliches, Quezon City

More skyscrapers to rise in Makati

By DJ Yap and Faith Alayon

EXPECT MORE SKYSCRAPERS AT THE OUTskirts of Makati's central business district.

The financial capital is set to implement the city's revised zoning ordinance to pave the way for the construction of high-rise buildings in the area surrounding the business center. "In effect, we are expanding the Makati central business district," Mayor-elect Jejomar Binay said last week.

According to him, the city government is already in talks with investors for the development of the area around the financial hub.

The upgrading of the floor area ratio will allow owners to expand their business by permitting them to build higher buildings, which was capped under the old zoning rules, Binay said.

Among the barangays included in the zoning reclassification are Palanan, Bangkal, Pio del Pilar, Cembo, West Rembo, Poblacion, Tejeros, Bel-Air, San Lorenzo, Magallanes, Guadalupe Viejo and Guadalupe Nuevo.

Binay said the plan was set in motion in response to the "growing demand" for more office spaces in Makati.

Specific areas eyed for commercial and residential development include J.P. Rizal Avenue, Pasong Tamo, Neptune St., Malugay and Yakal area, Zobel Roxas St., M. Reyes St., Dela Rosa St., Kalayaan Avenue, Antipolo Street, Nobla area and the Makati portion of Edsa.

Classroom lack still QC school's . . .

From page A25

For example, Francia explained that some grade 1 students attend classes from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. The next shift is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. while the last shift is from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

While most of the classrooms are of the standard size (5 x 7 meters), the school has been forced to construct makeshift rooms in the corridors for the students.

Willie Cacal, assistant to the principal, said ventilation and noise were the main problems of students and teachers whose classes were held in "cardboard rooms," so called because their walls are made of cardboard.

"Hopefully, we can remove these makeshift rooms once the new building is completed," Cacal said.

"But then again, we may still have to keep them because of the increasing student population every year which we cannot keep up with," he added, quietly surveying the school campus.

Francia said the school's growing population has compromised the children's learning ability and achievement level.

"At the end of every school year, public school students are administered national and division achievement tests," Francia explained.

Because of the large number of kids in each grade level, the brighter students are usually pulled down by the greater number of underachievers—who, according to the principal, are sadly affected by the overcrowded classrooms which at times, create an atmosphere not conducive to learning.

"On a happier note, despite our overpopulation problem, we do not rank last in the achievement tests," Francia said, looking at the bright side, adding that the school usually ended up third or fourth to the last.

But it has been a struggle, she admitted. "It is really hard to control such a large number of very active children in each classroom."

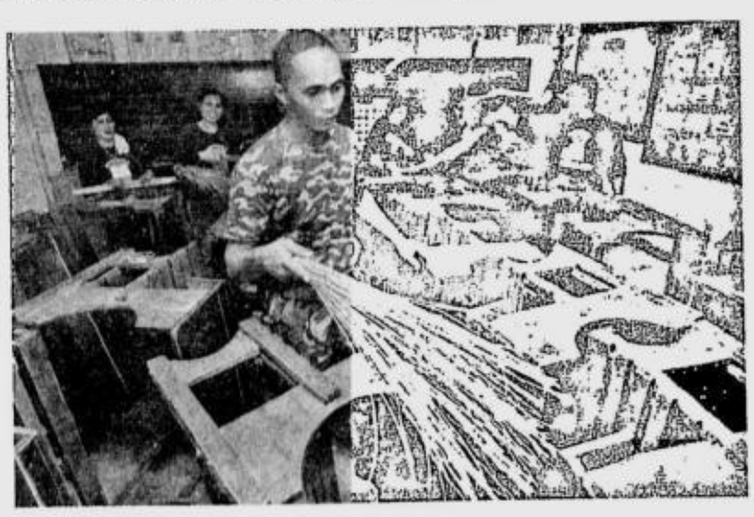
Francia said she has implemented a policy wherein teachers in each subject area have to meet at least once a month to discuss new trends and possible improvements in the teaching field.

"I am also requesting Mayor Sonny Belmonte to help us fix the Old Mathay and the Bagong Lipunan buildings, which have fallen into a very sorry state of disrepair," she added.

According to her, a task force has been formed to assist students and their parents on the first day of classes.

"It will also be my first time to attend the opening of classes at the Commonwealth Elementary School," Francia, who transferred from the Toro Hills Elementary School last August, said.

"Let's see how crowded it's going to be," the principal cheerfully said.



A SOLDIER helps teachers and parents prepare classrooms at the Commonwealth Elementary School in Quezon City for today's opening of classes. The school's enrollment went up to 13,000 this year, 300 students more compared to the year before.

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BILLBOARD ADVISORY

With the eminent occurrence this year of 13 strong typhoons and heavy rains as forecasted by PAG-ASA the DPWH is undertaking steps and activities to ensure public safety and prevent and/or minimize the impact of the damages brought about by such calamities. Hence this advisory is being issued to all service providers or owners of sign or signboards (billboards) erected without the necessary permits, installed or constructed on road-right-of-way yards/setbacks, made of substandard materials, and especially those constructed near, over or enclosing power lines, to dismantle voluntarily such structures, otherwise, the Department of Public Works and Highways will do the dismantling in exercise of its mandate pursuant to Administrative Orders 160 and 160-A dated October 4, 2006 and October 10, 2006, respectively, issued by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Service providers are advised to request the assistance of the DPWH to ascertain the stability of their "free-standing" and roof mounted sign or signboard structures and thereafter the issuance of clearance before they operate and continue their advertising activities.

We also enjoin the product manufacturers and advertisers to engage the services of legitimate service providers or billboard structure owners with DPWH clearance to avoid inconvenience and economic loss.

We also call on the concerned citizens to report to us any structures that are rusty, abandoned or pose imminent danger to collapse through telephone numbers: 3041514/3043184 (NBCDO); 3043280 (PID) or text DPWH (space) message and send to 2920 (Globe and Smart subscribers).

This advisory serves as notice to all service providers and other stakeholders of the Outdoor Promotion and Advertising Industry.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL M. BONOAN**
Officer-In-Charge, DPWH

PDI - June 4, 2007

GANITO KALAKI ANG BANTA NG BIRD FLU

Wala pang bird flu sa Pilipinas, pero kelangan pa ring mag-ingat. Ugaliing maghugas ng kamay at huwag basta-bastang humawak ng ibong may sakit, naghihingalo, o patay na.

Bird flu: Kayang iwasan, kayang pigilan.

Maghanda at matuto. Pumunta sa **www.iwasbirdflu.com**

Keeping the Philippines Bird Flu-Free: It's in our Hands

That's the good news. And it's well worth repeating: The Philippines, as you read this, is bird flu-free. But that's a headline that can change quicker than you can fry an egg if we aren't careful.

Birds are very much a part of our daily lives. From the pigeons we take care of to the chicken in rotisseries to the streetside grills peddling chicken feet and isaw. To our kitchens where tinola innocently simmers. To fast food chains overflowing with the latest crispy and juicy offerings and bus vendors pitching quail eggs. To the fertilizer makers and cockfighting aficionados. We're surrounded by birds and their byproducts, and it's all well and good for now.

But should bird flu make it to our shores, we'll be in for some difficult times.

Which is why numerous organizations have banded together to stop bird flu from entering the country, each in their own way. Some try spreading information. Some try to lobby for additional laws against the smuggling of wild birds. Others look for better enforcement of existing regulations.

But addressing the bird flu scare isn't a top secret, for-experts-only thing. It needs every one of us to pitch in. And we're not talking about massive contributions of time and money. Far from it.

We're talking about practicing Iwas Bird Flu habits. And it all begins with clean hands. The thorough and regular washing of hands will do more for arresting the spread of any virus than you may realize. It's also helpful to use at least 70% isopropyl alcohol should soap and water be unavailable for whatever reason.

Proper cough habits are important too. Cover your nose and mouth with tissue or a handkerchief every time you sneeze, cough or blow your nose. If you don't have tissue, cough into your sleeve. And while few of us encounter live birds on a usual basis, common sense also demands we keep away from sick or dying birds.

(For more information on specific signs of bird flu, please visit www.iwasbirdflu.com).

Arming ourselves with these three deceptively simple steps is the best defense we have against the avian influenza that is sweeping through most of Asia and the rest of the world.

Of course, there are other things concerned individuals can do, like reporting cases of chickens, ducks or birds inexplicably dying in large numbers to your local Veterinary, Agricultural or Health Officer or Barangay Captain, or the bird flu hotline. You can continue enjoying your favorite poultry dishes, just make sure all chickens and eggs are thoroughly cleaned and cooked. Bring your tinola to a boil, grill or fry chicken till its juices are clear, not pink. Make sure eggs and balut are fully cooked, not *malasado*.

But it all begins with keeping our hands clean, and keeping them to ourselves.

IWAS BIRD FLU

Signs of Bird Flu in Birds

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles and hocks
- Purpled discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Incoordination
- Diarrhea

Tips on how to protect yourself from Bird Flu

- **Practice proper hygiene.**
  Practice proper hand-washing before and after handling poultry.
- **Protect the children.**
  Do not allow children to play with birds.
- **Protect yourself and your workers.**
  Wear proper protective clothing and vaccinate workers and handlers when possible.
- **Protect your neighbors.**
  Report cases of sick, dying, or dead birds to the bird flu hotline or to your local veterinary clinic.

Call the Bird Flu Hotline:
925-9999

From the People of Japan · NAITF National Avian Influenza Task Force · Department of Agriculture · Bureau of Animal Industry · Department of Health · Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations · unicef

Thousands rally for US immigration bill changes

WASHINGTON—THOUSANDS OF immigrants and their supporters gathered on the west lawn of the Capitol on Saturday to urge the Senate to adopt legislation that would make it easier for illegal immigrants to become legal residents of the United States.

Braving the midday heat, the demonstrators, who were largely from the Washington area, streamed onto the lawn above the reflecting pool, waving American flags and carrying red, white, and blue placards.

The rally was smaller than those held here and across the United States last year. But its organizers, the National Capital Immigrant Coalition, said it was the first step in a campaign to press senators to change key aspects of the immigration bill they are considering.

Congress has been on a weeklong recess and will be in session again on Monday. Before the break, the Senate began discussion of an immigration bill that, among other things, would levy a $5,000 fine on illegal immigrants who seek legal status, require guest workers to return home for one year for every two years worked in the United States, and give higher priority for legal status to well-educated immigrants, rather than to those who have family here.

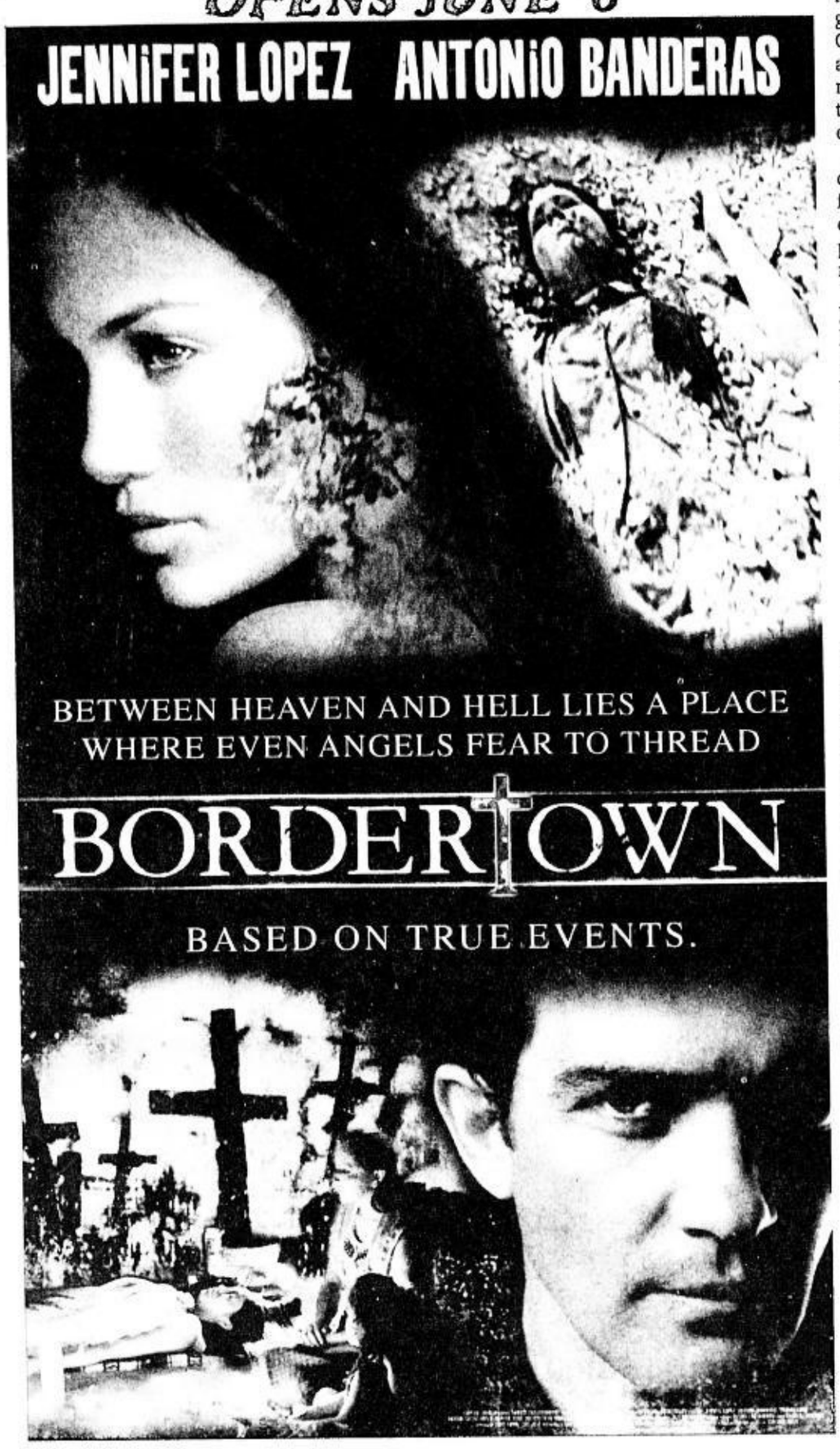
Conservatives have dismissed the bill as amnesty for illegal immigrants. But immigrants' supporters said provisions like the fine and the return clause were onerous barriers to legalization.

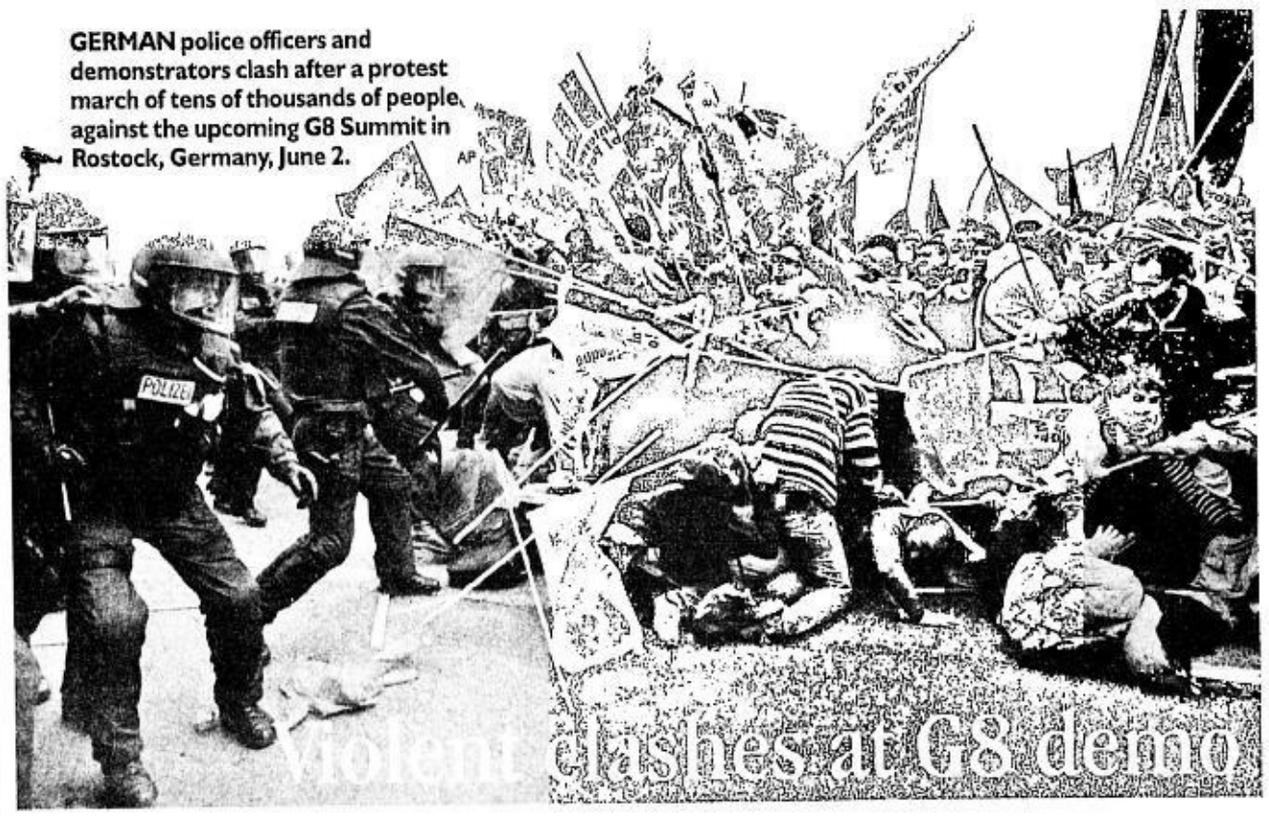
"I don't expect to get a perfect bill, but the current legislation has serious flaws we think need to be fixed," said Jaime Contreras, president of the immigration coalition's board. "If Congress doesn't take action this year, they are misreading the public. The immigrant community is paying close attention and knows who is on our side and who isn't."

Most of the speakers addressed the crowd in Spanish and organizers encouraged demonstrators to sign postcards to members of Congress and to call their senators. Some of those interviewed said they were naturalized citizens or legal residents who were closely following the debate and considered much of the pending bill unnecessarily punitive.

Others worried about the part of the bill that would award legal status to highly skilled immigrants more easily than to those with family here, saying it would split up families.

Alvaro Llanos, 34, of Washington, a citizen who emigrated from Chile, said, "If you want to gain residency, you get a certain number of points based on your skills, but in our community we do work Americans don't want to do." *NYT*





GERMAN police officers and demonstrators clash after a protest march of tens of thousands of people against the upcoming G8 Summit in Rostock, Germany, June 2. AP

ROSTOCK, GERMANY—MORE than 140 police were injured in violent clashes with Molotov cocktail-throwing protesters here on Saturday at a demonstration ahead of next week's G8 summit.

Riots broke out as tens of thousands of people marched through this northeastern German port, 25 km from the Baltic resort of Heiligendamm, where the leaders of the world's richest nations will begin a three-day meeting on Wednesday.

Several hundred demonstrators from a group of about 2,000 wearing black masks and hoods hurled Molotov cocktails, stones and bottles at police and several cars were set on fire or overturned.

Police used water cannons in an attempt to disperse the troublemakers, who were believed to be from a far-left group.

Some 25 police had serious injuries, a spokesperson said, while 78 protesters had been arrested. A total of 146 officers were hurt, according to the spokesperson.

The violence only involved a small percentage of the 20,000 people that took part in the march, according to police figures. The organizers of the march—a collection of antiglobalization and antipoverty groups—claimed 80,000 people had taken part. Police put the figure at 30,000.

Werner Ratz of the ATTAC antiglobalization organization said clashes began when the group of violent protesters threw rocks at a police vehicle with an officer inside.

Police then sent in two antiriot squads to rescue the officer, which led to clashes, he said.

"There is no justification for such violence against people and we formally distance ourselves from it," Ratz said.

The clashes bore out fears expressed by German authorities that left-wing militants would cause unrest during protests against the summit.

Another organizer of peaceful protesters lamented that it could be difficult to restore calm.

"Unfortunately, it is more difficult to calm the situation than it is to enflame it," Manfred Stenner said.

Demonstrations at past G8 summits have been scarred by violence, most notoriously in the Italian city of Genoa in 2001 when a demonstrator was shot dead by police during riots.

The Rostock march was the biggest event of a week of demonstrations against the meeting of the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The march had begun in a peaceful atmosphere.

Protesters carried banners reading: "G8 terrorism, war, climate killer" and "Make Capitalism History."

Others called for the world's most industrialized nations to fulfill their pledges to increase aid to Africa.

Dirk Mirow, a 37-year-old German taking part in the march, said he was hoping the summit would achieve a major breakthrough on capping greenhouse gases.

"I am here to protest for the climate because I have a 2-year-old daughter and I'm wondering what sort of world we are creating for her," he said.

More protests are planned in the coming days, with militants threatening to block roads around Rostock airport from Wednesday to prevent the leaders and their delegations from reaching the summit venue. *AFP*

Civilian deaths in Iraq jump to 2,000 in May

BAGHDAD—THE NUMBER OF CIVILIANS killed in Iraq jumped to nearly 2,000 in May, the highest monthly toll since the start of a US-backed security crackdown in February, according to figures released on Saturday.

Militants blew up a strategic bridge that links Baghdad to the northern cities of Kirkuk and Arbil, and a mortar barrage on the Sunni enclave of Fadhil in mainly Shi'ite eastern Baghdad, killed 10 people and wounded 30, police said.

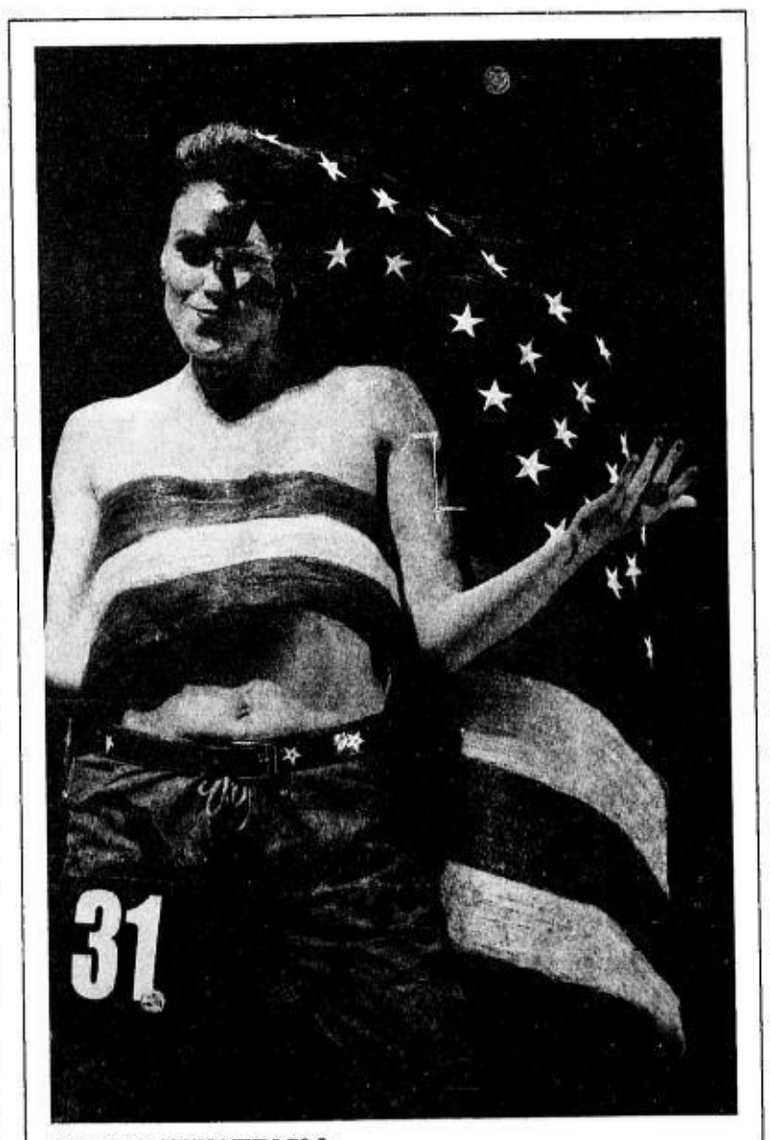
In Arbil, the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and Masoud Barzani, president of Kurdistan, urged Turkey not to send troops into the region to crush Kurdish separatist rebels believed to be hiding there.

An Interior Ministry official, who did not want to be named because he was not authorized to release the figures, said 1,944 civilians were killed in May, a 29-percent hike over April. At least 174 soldiers and policemen were killed in the same period.

The death toll was based on statistics compiled by Iraq's ministries of interior, defense and health on the number of people killed and wounded in attacks in Iraq.

After three months of declines, there has been a sharp rise in the number of sectarian murders in Baghdad. Mortar attacks in the capital are becoming deadlier and car bombs remain common.

The United Nations has rebuked Iraq's government for refusing to disclose the politically sensitive civilian casualty figures in what it calls a "rapidly worsening humanitarian crisis." *Reuters*



'RAPUNZEL' TRICIA
Big hair winner Tricia Nathan of Grafton, Mass., shows off her hair during the Imperia Vodka Hair Competition in Manchester, N.H., June 2. More than 40 contestants competed for the biggest hair and the first place prize of $7,500 as they raise money for breast cancer. AP

Fighting worsens as Lebanese Army surrounds militants

TRIPOLI, LEBANON—HEAVY SHELLING and gunfire continued for the second day at the Nahr al Bared refugee camp, as the Lebanese Army intensified its offensive against the Fatah al Islam militia.

Three soldiers were killed and 15 were wounded in the fighting by Saturday afternoon, the Army reported, raising the number of the Army's deaths from the two-day offensive to six.

Dozens of militants from Fatah al Islam, a Qaida-inspired group, have also been killed or wounded, the Army said. But that figure could not be independently verified, and it was not immediately clear how many of those victims were fighters and how many were among the thousands of civilians trapped in the camp.

Reports have estimated that about 8,000 of what was once 40,000 Palestinian refugees may still be in the camp.

By midday, the Army had wrested control of all the positions dominated by the militants outside the camp and had destroyed many sniping positions in the camp, stopping short of actually crossing into the official boundaries of the camp, the military said.

"The Army is now fighting on the exterior lines and the militants are fighting on the interior lines," said Elias Hanna, a former general in the Army. "They are trying to squeeze them inside their circle."

An Army helicopter attacked suspected militant hideouts with missile and machine-gun fire on the western edge of the camp, apparently in an attempt to block escape by sea, The Associated Press reported.

"This is the beginning of the end," said Mazen Faqih, a member of Lebanon's civil defense corps who has helped evacuate bodies and the injured from the camp over the last two weeks. "The Army took over buildings inside the camps, and now it's just a matter of time.

The offensive began on Friday as the Lebanese Army tightened its cordon around the camp, moving several hundred yards closer to the camp, seizing new ground in a daylong fight that left 18 dead and dozens wounded.

The fighting broke a tense 10-day cease-fire, and it raised fears that the Army was planning to move directly into the camp.

The militants again said they would fight to the last man, if necessary.

"Morale is high," said Abu Hureira, deputy leader of Fatah al Islam, speaking to The Associated Press by telephone. "Let them come. We are ready." *NYT*

HE'S BACK

Cuba's President Fidel Castro (right) and Vietnamese Communist Party chief Nong Duc Manh hug during a meeting in Havana June 2. Castro appeared more vigorous in the first images of the Cuban leader to be broadcast on state television in four months, backing up reports that he has put his health crisis behind him. REUTERS

Father of Anna Nicole's baby sues his ex-attorney

LOS ANGELES—LARRY BIRKHEAD, THE FAther of Anna Nicole Smith's baby, sued his former attorney, claiming she defrauded him of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Birkhead's lawsuit, filed Friday in Superior Court, claims that Debra Opri offered to represent him for free during a paternity dispute involving the baby because the publicity would benefit her career. Birkhead's lawsuit was filed just days after Opri filed her own suit, claiming that Birkhead did not pay his bills for her legal services.

Birkhead's lawsuit accuses Opri of depositing at least $865,000 (euro 644,000) owed to him for an unnamed project into an attorney client trust account against his wishes. After Opri refused to turn over the money, Birkhead fired her, the lawsuit said.

"Opri placed her own career desires and needs as a priority over the needs, interests and desires of her own client," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit also said Opri solicited donations to a legal fund and revealed confidential information during media interviews—all without Birkhead's consent. Opri is also accused of charging Birkhead for her travel expenses, dinners with friends and entertainment expenses.

In a brief statement released Friday, Opri responded by saying that her former client is avoiding the issue of his unpaid legal fees.

"He has now admitted, however, that he can pay his legal bills having received over 1 million dollars in a media deal," she wrote. "This does not include the untold millions he has received for selling photos of his daughter."

Opri said her work on Birkhead's behalf entailed hundreds of hours of work and required her to travel to multiple states and outside the country. Her lawsuit did not specify a dollar amount.

Birkhead sued Smith in October seeking a paternity test of her daughter to determine who was the baby's father. *AP*

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No one is SPARED in the Fight Against Corruption!

The New Rules of Procedure of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission
Issued March 14, 2007

SCOPE OF AUTHORITY

Section 1. Jurisdiction – The Commission shall, upon complaint or on its own initiative, investigate or otherwise receive, gather and evaluate information and evidence, against—

(a) Presidential Appointees in the Executive Department occupying the position of Assistant Regional Director or an equivalent rank and higher, otherwise classified as Salary Grade 26 and higher, under Republic Act 6758 known as the Compensation and Position Classification Act of 1989, including Officers of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) when directed by a referral or endorsement from the President.

(b) Presidential Appointees who are members of the governing board of any instrumentality, regulatory agency or chartered institution, and Directors or Officers who are appointed or nominated by the President to government-owned or controlled corporations or corporations where the government has a minority interest, or who otherwise represent the interest of the government; and

(c) Other public officials and private persons who act in conspiracy, collusion or connivance with any said Presidential Appointee,

For acts and omissions constituting violations of:

(a) Republic Act 3019, as amended, otherwise known as the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act;

(b) Republic Act 1379, on the unlawful acquisition of property by a public officer or employee;

(c) Republic Act 6713, otherwise known as The Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees;

(d) Title Seven Book Two of the Revised Penal Code;

(e) Executive Order 292, Series of 1987, otherwise known as The Administrative Code of 1987, whenever acts and omissions constituting violations of any of the foregoing laws and issuances are therein defined and penalized;

(f) Rules and Regulations duly promulgated by competent authority to implement any of the foregoing laws and issuances; and –

(g) Other laws and issuances, violations of which are referred by the President to the Commission.

Section 2. Separation from Service – The resignation, retirement or separation from employment of any public official under investigation shall not divest the Commission of authority to pursue the investigation to its logical conclusion and to submit to the President its findings and recommendations.

ADMITTANCE EVALUATION AND QUEST FOR EVIDENCE

Section 1. Complaints – The Commission shall take cognizance of and act on a complaint or information, received or obtained in any form or from any source, whenever it appears on its face that the factual allegations thereof are verifiable and constitute acts and omissions by persons within its authority to investigate.

For this purpose, clippings, reproductions, recordings or transcriptions of media reports, telephone calls, personal conversations, electronically sent or digitally conveyed messages and other forms of complaint or information, except verified, anonymous, or signed complaints, or those referred by the President or any disciplinary authority, shall be endorsed in writing by anybody from within or without the Commission to be deemed filed as a complaint.

Every such complaint, upon determination of jurisdiction over the person of the respondent, shall immediately be docketed and assigned a case number for appropriate action by the Commission. Otherwise, the Commission shall cause the immediate dismissal thereof or take such action as may be necessary for the just disposition of the same.

The ultimate facts, and not the conclusions of law, as alleged in the complaint shall determine the nature of the offense imputed and the jurisdiction of the Commission.

If on its face or upon due evaluation of the allegations of the complaint it appears that the Commission has no jurisdiction over the offense complained of, the same shall be referred to the competent government agency or disciplining authority for appropriate action.

The complainant, if known to the Commission, shall be informed of the action taken

Section 2. Determination of Facts – In its fact finding and quest for evidence, the Commission shall use every and all reasonable means to speedily and objectively ascertain facts without regard to technicalities of law or procedure but in all instances respecting the rights of persons and observing due process.

For this purpose, the Commission may administer oaths, issue summons and subpoena government personnel and records. It may likewise enlist the aid and support of any law enforcement agency and/or call upon any government agency for assistance, whether for acquisition of documents and objects pertinent to the investigation or to participate in the investigation itself.

Section 3. Lifestyle and Asset Consistency Checks – Even when not expressly prayed for in the Complaint, and except in complaints for violations of Section 5 (a) of Republic Act No. 6713 and Sections 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245 of Title Seven Book Two of the Revise Penal Code, Lifestyle and Asset Consistency Checks shall form part of all investigations and shall, when warranted by the result, be the subject of a separate Formal Charge.

Section 4. Prima Facie Evidence. – When on the face of the complaint and/or evidence obtained in the investigation, there appears probable cause to engender a belief that the allegations thereof may be true, the Director of Investigation Office, as the complainant, shall sign and file the appropriate Formal Charge.

The private complainant, if any, shall then be considered as a mere complaining witness.

REJOINERS ON AND INCIDENTS OF FORMAL CHARGE

Section 1. Formal Charge – The Formal Charge shall narrate the ultimate facts constituting an offense, specifying the law, issuance, rule or regulation violated.

The respondent shall be served copies of the Formal Charge, the affidavits and other documentary evidence substantiating the same.

Section 2. Preventive Suspension. – The Commission may, upon application of the Investigation Office, recommend to the President the issuance of an Order of Preventive Suspension –

(a) When the offense charged is punishable by removal from the service; or

(b) When respondent's continued stay in office would prejudice the fair determination of the case.

The preventive suspension shall continue until the investigation is terminated by the Commission but in no case shall exceed ninety (90) days, except when the delay is due to the fault, negligence or petition of the respondent, in which case, the period of such delay shall not be counted in computing the period of suspension.

Section 3. Answer – The respondent shall have ten (10) working days from receipt of the Formal Charge and its attachments within which to file his Answer, which shall be under oath and accompanied by supporting affidavits and documentary evidence, copy furnished his co-respondents, if any.

No motion to dismiss and/or for bill of particulars shall be entertained.

A motion for extension of the time within which to file the Answer and/or the supporting evidence may be filed and granted only once and only for sufficient cause.

Section 4. Failure to Answer – Failure to file an Answer within the allowed period shall be deemed a waiver of respondent's right to be heard and to present evidence on his behalf.

The Commission shall then proceed to consider the investigation as terminated or submitted for resolution based on available evidence.

Section 5. Clarificatory Questions. – Upon the filing of an Answer, the case shall be considered submitted for resolution unless the Commission, in its sound discretion, decides to propound clarificatory questions in which case hearings may be conducted and summons and subpoenas issued for the purpose.

The proceedings and appearances before the Commission shall be non-adversarial and no cross-examination by the parties shall be allowed. The Commission, however, may, in seeking clarification, adopt such questions as may be submitted to it in writing by the parties.

Resetting of appearances may be allowed only once and only for sufficient cause.

Section 6. Position Papers – The Commission may require the parties, or the parties may ask to be allowed, to submit Position Papers to argue their case.

Section 7. Legal Assistance – In the proceedings before the Commission, the respondent may be assisted by counsel who is not a government lawyer.

RESOLUTION

Section 1. Decision – The Commission shall endeavor to complete an investigation within ninety (90) days from filing of the complaint. The findings of the Commission shall be rendered en banc and in form of Resolution addressed to the President stating its factual and legal conclusions, and its recommendations on the appropriate administrative and accessory penalties to imposed if it be one finding fault in the respondent.

It shall likewise include, whenever relevant, recommendations on the adoption of appropriate policies and/or the undertaking of other actions or measures relative or consequent to the import of the case on the anti-graft and corruption program, plans and strategies of the government.

The records shall be transmitted together with the Resolution to the Office of the President and the investigation shall be deemed terminated.

Section 2. Inhibitions – A Commissioner may, on motion or on his own volition, inhibit himself from participating in the resolution of an investigation on ethical grounds; Provided, that when by reason of inhibitions the Commission is prevented from acting as a collegial body it shall transmit the records of the case to the President with the written and individual explanations of the Commissioners.

Section 3. Notice – The respondent and complaining witness shall be informed only that the investigation has been terminated, and the records forwarded to the Office of the President.

No manifestation, motion, or pleading shall thereafter be accepted by the Commission unless the case is first remanded to it by the President for further proceedings.

Section 4. Criminal Prosecution. – The Commission shall, if warranted by finding of a prima facie case, file the appropriate criminal complaint against the respondent before the Office of the Ombudsman or the Department of Justice.

The Commission may assist in the prosecution of the case, and shall monitor the same in all its stages until final judgment is rendered thereon by the courts.

Section 5. Enforcement of Affirmations and Judgments. – The Commission shall ensure that the decisions of the President on its findings and recommendations and that of the courts and other disciplining authorities on complaints filed or referred at the instance of the Commission, are enforced and implemented properly and without delay.

ASSIGNMENT OF CASES

Section 1. Case Officers. – The Chairperson shall, upon filing of the Formal Charge, assign the investigation to any of the Commissioners. The assigned Commissioner shall serve as the Officer-in-Charge, and as such shall preside in the reception of evidence in clarificatory hearings or assign a Hearing Officer for the purpose, administer oaths and, on behalf of the Commission and after due consultations, sign all incidental rulings, orders, summons and subpoenas; Provided, that in investigations involving Presidential Appointees with Salary Grade of 30 and above the Commission shall sit en banc during such clarificatory hearings; Provided finally that in all instances the final Resolution of the case disposing of the same shall be decided and signed by the Commission in accordance with Rule V hereof;

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH SUMMONS AND SUBPOENAS

Section 1. Effect. – Any unreasonable delay or unjustified failure or refusal of a Presidential Appointee or any other government employee to comply with the summons or subpoenas issued by the Commission shall constitute a ground for disciplinary action to be recommended to the President by the Commission.

The Commission may, for this purpose, also file appropriate charges or complaints against the erring public official or employee before other disciplining authorities or competent tribunals.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURES

Section 1. Prohibition – The Commission and its personnel shall not disclose or make public any record or information in connection with any pending investigation when such disclosure would deprive the respondent of his right to a fair and impartial disposition of the proceedings.

Only the Chairperson may disclose any information to the public; Provided that any such disclosure shall be balanced, fair and accurate.

Any party who, by any form of public disclosure, causes injury to the rights of others or adversely affect the fair conduct of the investigation shall be made liable by the Commission under existing laws.

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US, China ease up on dispute over military buildup

SINGAPORE—THE UNITED States and China turned down the heat Saturday on a simmering dispute over Beijing's military buildup, with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressing optimism about future relations.

Gates called for a more detailed military dialogue with China to avoid future miscalculations, while a top Chinese general said Beijing was prepared to open a "hotline" with Washington.

"I think it is an important start," said Gates. "There has clearly been greater transparency on the part of the Chinese." The establishment of a direct telephone link between the US and Chinese defense ministries would help avoid miscalculations and was "another step forward in the development of the relationship," he said.

The comments from the two officials, both of whom were attending an Asian security conference in Singapore, came in the wake of a Pentagon report that questioned the motivation behind Beijing's drive to modernize its military.

Gates downplayed past US rhetoric on China's military might, alluding only in passing to the Pentagon report by reiterating Washington's concerns over "the opaqueness of Beijing's military spending and modernization programs."

"But as Gen. Pete Pace, our chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff pointed out, there is some difference between 'capacity' and 'intent.' And I believe there is reason to be optimistic about the US-China relationship."

"As we gain experience in dealing with each other, relationships can be forged that will build trust over time," Gates said.

GATES AP

His mild tone contrasted with that taken by his predecessor Donald Rumsfeld, who used the same forum two years ago to sharply question China's intentions in building up its military.

Later in a question-and-answer session, Gates said dialogue could be a useful tool in helping countries with differing ideologies to understand each other better, referring to Washington's Cold War-era negotiations with Moscow.

"While we have no conflict at this point, this kind of transparency, this kind of discussion is the kind of thing that prevents miscalculation and helps each side understand where the other is headed and what its intentions are," Gates said.

"That kind of dialogue, whether or not it involves specific proposals for arms control or anything else, I think is immensely valuable, and I think is one of the great assets of developing the military-to-military dialogue between the United States and the People's Republic." *AFP*

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Ateneo trips rival La Salle in V-League/A32

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■ Cavs reach NBA finals/A34

ROYAL RUMBLE Barangay Ginebra Kings playmaker Egay Echavez (front) and center Billy Mamaril (back) battle Air21 Express enforcer Homer Se in a loose ball scramble during their game last night. The Kings defeated the Express, 121-116, for their 12th win in 18 outings. *Story on A24*

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Board to put new PBA rule under scrutiny

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION BOARD CONVENES IN A SPECIAL meeting on Thursday to discuss the loopholes in the Restricted Trading List (RTL) that led to the controversial Romel Adducul-Enrico Villanueva trade last week.

Saying that "we've been through bigger problems than this," chairman Ricky Vargas of Talk 'N Text yesterday expressed confidence that all tensions will die down and that matters will be resolved in the meeting.

"The gentlemen of the board will be able to sit down and discuss things," Vargas told a select

BOARD/ A32

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Board to put new PBA rule under scrutiny

VARGAS

From page A31

group of scribes before their game against San Miguel Beer at the Araneta Coliseum. "I granted the request for a (special) board meeting to clarify certain issues.

"And the issue here is the RTL, not the trade which I think is just a consequence," he added.

Buddy Encarnado of Sta. Lucia and Joaqui Trillo of Alaska voiced out their displeasure on Friday regarding the Villanueva-Adducul swap, which they thought violated the RTL the very first time it was supposed to be implemented.

Trillo, whose boss, Wilfred Steven Uytengsu, will arrive on Wednesday from a business trip in the United States, even said that he will raise the motion for the board to declare the trade null and void and reverse the approval of commissioner Noli Eala.

"We will follow the process allowed by the (PBA) by-laws," Vargas answered. "We will know (from the by-laws) what can and cannot be done."

The controversy started when Villanueva was stricken off Red Bull's RTL for being "insubordinate" and "unhappy" with the squad, which resulted in the RP Team member being dealt to San Miguel for Adducul.

Compounding matters was when Adducul found his way into Purefoods, a sister team of San Miguel, with Red Bull just getting second-string big man Don Camaso and second round draft rights either this year or the next.

Both Encarnado and Trillo, who were interviewed separately on Friday, are questioning the legality of the trade because it is now obvious that Red Bull gave up so much to acquire so little and vice versa for the Tender Juicy Giants.

Encarnado and Trillo said that Welcoat and Coca-Cola are also up in arms after the trade was approved.

The RTL was hatched to curb one-sided trading among teams and lessen the chance of sister teams trading among themselves. Under the rule, each team will put a player in its RTL and that player can only be traded for a player belonging to that squad's RTL.

Red Bull "delisted" the 6-foot-6 Villanueva from its RTL supposedly for disciplinary action, a reason Encarnado did not buy.

"It is the commissioner's job to impose penalties and sanctions of such a player," Encarnado had said.

Ateneo trips rival La Salle in V-League

By Romina S. Austria

ATENEO ZOOMED TO A share of second place with a 22-25, 25-23, 25-21, 25-15 win yesterday over arch rival and tournament defending champion La Salle in the Shakey's V-League women's volleyball tournament at The Arena in San Juan.

In other matches, the streak of bad luck of both Adamson and Letran ended as they downed separate opponents and barged into the win column.

Ateneo's third straight win, which gave it a 3-1 card along with idle San Sebastian, was again made possible by the heads-up performances of guest players Michelle Laborte and Thai playing assistant coach Kanchana Jindarat.

Jindarat gave Ateneo a game-high 23 points while Laborte contributed 15. The duo also had a combined eight blocks.

La Salle, which took the opening set but never had a chance to tie the match in the fourth set, dropped to fourth place at 2-3.

GAMES TOMORROW
(The Arena, San Juan)
1 p.m.—Adamson vs Ateneo
3 p.m.—Letran vs La Salle
5 p.m.—UST vs San Sebastian

In the opening match, the Lady Falcons pulled off an upset with a 20-25, 25-17, 25-16, 25-22 win over inaugural tournament champion University of Santo Tomas Tigresses.

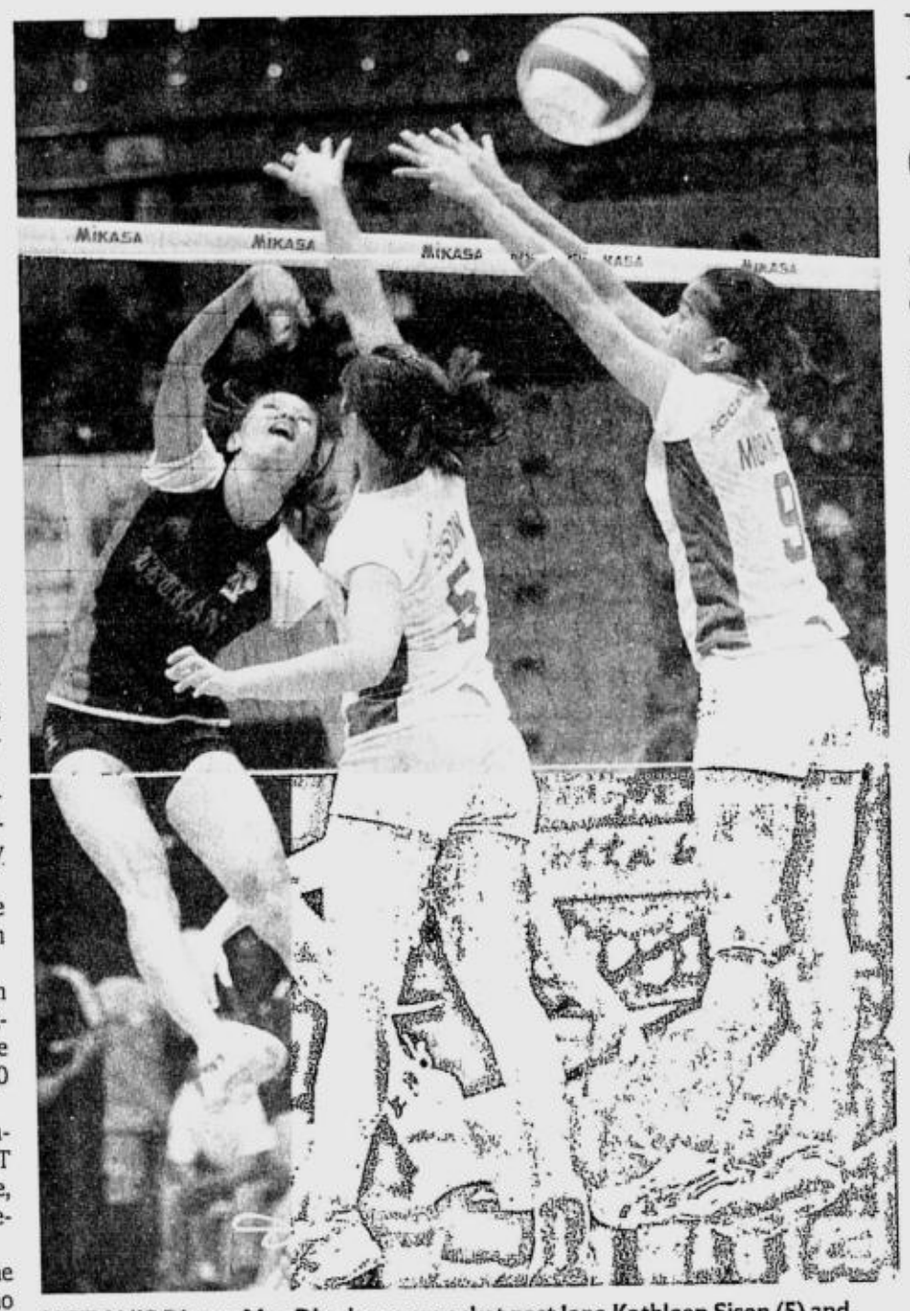
Letran then posted a 19-25, 25-23, 28-26, 25-12 beating of Far Eastern University Lady Tamaraws in the third game.

Adamson now sports a 1-3 card while UST dropped to a third-best 2-2. Letran and FEU have similar 1-4 slates.

Guest player Suzanne Roces started in all but one of four sets for Adamson, making 29 points on 97 tries, while Rissa Jane Laguilles took care of defense, blocking 20 UST attempts.

Roces' output was more than the combined production of normally prolific UST players Venus Bernal and Mary Jean Balse, who came up with 15 and 11 points, respectively.

Letran, meanwhile, got a giant game from six-foot starter Dianna Mae Diaz who topscored with 17 points while foiling 23 FEU tries.



LETRAN'S Dianne Mae Diaz looses a rocket past Jane Kathleen Sison (5) and Bernadette Morada of FEU in yesterday's game. INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Filoil hoops q'finals get going today

IT'S DOWN TO EIGHT TEAMS IN THE Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup as the quarterfinal round starts today at The Arena in San Juan featuring the top four squads of the two groups.

The National University-Letran tussle kicks off the four-game schedule at 11 a.m., followed by the San Beda-Jose Rizal University tiff at 1 p.m.

Group B topnotcher La Salle, which ended the eliminations with a 5-2 card, squares off with No. 4 Mapua at 3 p.m. while Group A top seed University of the East battles Far Eastern at 5 p.m.

NU ended the Group B eliminations with a second-best 4-3 card while Letran was at No. 3 at 3-4, emerging with a superior quotient than Mapua which also submitted a 3-4 mark.

JRU dropped to second place at 5-1 in Group A following a loss to also-ran University of Santo Tomas, 96-92, at the close of eliminations last Friday while San Beda maintained its hold of third spot with an 87-69 rout of Philippine Christian University for a 4-2 overall tally.

La Salle finished its elimination campaign with a 77-64 loss to UE but retained a hold of top spot at 5-2 as NU likewise lost its final assignment to drop to 4-3.

Mapua has San Beda to thank for its quarterfinal seat as the Red Lions' win over the PCU Dolphins assured its entry into today's matches. Had PCU won, Mapua would have been bumped off due to its inferior quotient.

UE will be carrying the momentum of its 6-0 mark into the quarterfinals against fellow UAAP squad FEU.

Today's winners will advance to the June 11 semifinals while the winner-take-all championship game is set on June 13. *Romina S. Austria*

New revelations on why Pacquiao lost at the polls

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IN FAIRNESS TO MANNY PACQUIAO, there were actually a few out there who had honestly wanted him to win in the last elections.

Count among them those who raked it in while the most popular living Filipino sports hero wantonly wasted millions in his futile political battle.

However, there was the usual smirk and shrug of the shoulder among countless boxing fans when the result of the vote in South Cotabato was made official.

The popular reaction to Pacquiao's loss in the congressional race to wispy Darlene Antonino-Custodio was an honest "I told you so."

* * *

It was easy to conclude that there was general relief over the Pacquiao setback in his battle for a seat in Congress.

Fans, feeling rewarded, were declaring that, henceforth, Pacquiao could devote his time to boxing.

At least, Pacquiao would no longer demand a recount, after he wasted precious hours on the floor while contesting the election results.

But the poor loser was a sorry sight, more pitiful than a knockout victim who did not know what had hit him.

* * *

Unfortunately, Pacquiao suffered a second and more scathing humiliation.

When they conducted a poll to determine the eight greatest Filipino boxers of all time, Pacquiao landed a poor sixth in the poll.

Gabriel Elorde, who reigned as world 130 lb. king for seven years, topped the selection.

Naturally, the next question asked was: Would've Pacquiao topped that popularity poll had he not decided to enter the dirty world of Philippine politics?

That would no longer be easy to determine.

* * *

Pacquiao, by the way, will be in New York this week to receive his award as best fighter of the world from the Boxing Writers of America.

Meanwhile, out there in Pacquiao's hometown of General Santos City, people have stopped asking why the favorite son of the tuna capital of the world suffered a knockout in his last fight.

The reason behind the defeat was hardly a secret.

In fact, there were varied conclusions, each sounding credible and valid, on why Pacquiao suffered that humiliating defeat in the last election.

Reader Renato Ramones Reyes, who gave his address at 10 Magsaysay Avenue, Gen. Santos City, threw most of the blame on Pacquiao's general campaign manager whom he described as an irresponsible, greedy, incompetent hanger-on who took advantage of Pacquiao's sincerity and innocence:

* * *

We reprint the handwritten letter in its original form:

Dear Sir,

Binabasa ko yong column mo "Bare Eye" lalo na kung si Manny Pacquiao ang subject matter mo. Hindi totoo na si Darlene at si GMA ang nag-knockout kay Manny. Maybe kung sa points 20 percent lang. Ang malaking dahilan ng pagkatalo ni Manny ay ang kanyang General Campaign Manager (GCM), na incompetent, tamad, lasengo, womanizer, sugarol, sabungero, at marami pang iba. Consider this:

1) Mayroon bang GCM na hindi sumasama sa rally, lalo pa nuong nasa States si Manny?

2) Nuong election day, 10 a.m. tulog pa si GCM kaya marami sa poll watchers ang umuwi dahil walang ID at ang iba lumipat sa kalaban.

3) 3)Lahat ng appointment sa media bureau ni Manny choice ni GCM at wala naman silang ginawa para idepensa si Pacquiao, inom lang ginawa nila tuwing gabi. Millions of pesos daw ibinayad sa kanila at malaki commission ng GCM.

4) Lahat ng disbursements ay dadaan kay GCM, kailangang approved niya, kaya lahat ng expenses may cut siya.

5) P175 million daw ang ginastos ni Manny. Tanong: Saan napunta itong napakalaking halaga?

6) Si Manny naman nagpapaluko kay GCM dahil sa matagal na itong inireport sa kanya. Tila may malaking secret si Manny kaya hawak siya sa leeg ni GCM.

7) Hindi mahirap ibenta si Manny kaya lang walang organization ang kanyang kampanya. The GCM doesn't know how to organize and, worse, his main agenda was not how to make Manny win but how to make money out of MP.

Sir, if you want to know more about the GCM, please come over to GenSan and ask about him from lawyers, civic groups, businessmen, etc.

Siya rin ang nag-advise kay Manny na huwag mag-concede. After two days, ang uncle ni GCM, si City Fiscal Jamora, ang nag-convince sa kay MP na mag-concede at kalimutan na ang protesta kasi malaki na ang abante ni Darlene.

(Due to legal reasons, we had to withhold the name of Pacquiao's general campaign manager—RT.)

Tuason-Bedi tops Sherwood Invt'l with 64

THE PAIR OF JINGY TUASON AND SHEAN Bedi combined for a net eight-under-par 64 recently to win the overall crown in the Invitational tournament of the Sherwood Hills Golf Club in Trece Martirez, Cavite.

Bedi, SVP for marketing of Camp John Hay, and Tuason, marketing manager of Matsons Realty Corp., finished tied with four other teams with the same score but the duo won it on their lower handicap.

Yuichiro Nakanishi and partner Nestor Sevilla shot the day's best overall gross score of 68 at the par-72 layout as they shared the spotlight with Tuason and Bedi in the champions' podium.

This year's annual Invitational, according to club chair Robert John Sobrepena and sports and games committee head Jimmy Borromeo, was staged as a way of thanking the members, friends and guests for helping Sherwood Hills capture the distinction of being No. 85 best golf course outside the US by Golf Digest International.

Ramontito Garcia and Jason Lim, who also fired a 64, took the Division I title. They were followed by Tony Villaruel and Owen Fulo and second runners-up Marilyn Ty and Lota Nemee.

In Division II, three teams also shot 64s but the tandem of Fidel Portillo and Ruffy Juan came out on top in the end. Manny Santander and Eric Juidines checked in at second position. Third placers were Richie Santos and Tonton Roman.

Mary Dy (69) and Jovi Neri (70) showed the way in the guests-sponsors division.

Tagle banners six Mercedes Trophy Asian final qualifiers

MARC LOUIE TAGLE FLAUNTED STEADY putting and course management to clinch the championship in Class A in the prestigious national finals of the annual Mercedes Trophy Philippines 2007 held at the beautiful Sta. Elena Golf Club last week.

Tagle, a successful businessman and an avid performance car collector, birdied the difficult par-five 16th hole and made eight pars against eight bogeys and a lone double bogey to finish with a net four-under-par 68 and prevail over an elite field assembled by event organizer CATS Motors Inc.

With his victory Tagle qualifies for the Mercedes Trophy Asian Final set from Aug. 15 to 17 in Queensland, Australia.

"It feels great and amazing. I only got one birdie but I felt good about my round," said Tagle, who was awarded a handsome crystal trophy and a champion Mercedes Trophy golf bag by CATS Motors' chair Greg Yu and president Felix Ang.

Joining Tagle in the Asian Final, which is slated at the Hope Island and Glades courses, are the champions and runners-up of Classes A, B and C. Former Comelec commissioner Ralph Lantion was the second placer in Class A, three strokes behind Tagle.

Businessman Luis Manuel Banson and Pepsi Cola country manager Varu Berry (Class B) and Realtor Walter Villanueva together with PLDT SVP Ernesto Alberto (Class C) will also fly on business class to Australia via Cathay Pacific.

FIGHTINGEST: Top American cocker Larry Whitehead (left) and outgoing Rizal Gov. Ito Ynares show their finest fighting birds during yesterday's National Cockers Association (NCA) World Championship Derby press conference at the Edsa Shangri-La in Mandaluyong City. Looking on is fellow participant William Go. Whitehead heads a star-studded US contingent in the derby. INQUIRER PHOTO/EDWIN BACASMAS

Welcoat juniors top Batang PBA

KETLEY VILLAR AND MICHAEL ALVA SCORED 19 points apiece as Batang Welcoat-Makati held off Batang Talk 'N Text-Quezon City, 94-72, yesterday to win the Division II championship in the Burlington-Batang PBA Basketball League at the Araneta Coliseum.

Tomas Torres poured in 11 of his 17 points in the third quarter as the defending champion Batang Dragons outscored the Batang Phone Pals, 22-14, for a 59-51 lead after three quarters.

Then Villar took over in the fourth, scoring 14 in the period as the Batang Welcoat-Makati held off repeated rallies by Batang TNT-Quezon City, who was led by the 20 points of Francis Paguirigan.

Ferdinand Ravena tallied 28 points and Jolo Mendoza and Jose Balmaceda added 10 each to power the Batang Talk 'N Text-Quezon City I to a 99-41 blowout over the Batang Air 21-Manila I and clinch the Division I title for kids 9-10 years old.

NBC CAGING

In-form Ozamiz spills Iligan five

OZAMIZ CITY—LAST YEAR'S GRAND SLAM titlist Ozamiz is finally back in championship form.

After struggling in the early part of the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball tournament, the Cotta Shrine cagers knocked Firefly-Iligan out of first place with a convincing 96-84 victory Saturday at the Gov. Angel Medina Sr. gym here.

Billy Bansil and Orly Alvaradao ably backed Marlon Basco as the charges of Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog turned a tight contest in the first three quarters into a rout.

With a 5-2 record, Ozamiz trails idle frontrunner Tagaytay Spring (5-1) and Iligan (6-2) in the tournament supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Yahoo Philippines, San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Trans Asia Shipping Lines, Molten, Nature's Spring, Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

"*Bumabalik na yung dati naming* (We've got back our) chemistry," said Ozamiz coach Albert Calvo. "*Pagkatapos bumagsak kami sa* (After we fell to) 1-2, I challenged the boys to play like true champions."

STANDINGS	W	L
Tagaytay	5	1
Iligan	6	2
Ozamiz	5	2
Pagadian	7	4
Valencia	5	4
Quezon	4	5
GenSan	3	4
Davao	2	8
Iloilo	1	8

Basco knocked in 23 points while Bansil and Bruce Dacia had 15 each as Ozamiz limited Iligan to 13 points in the fourth quarter and held Bong Marata, who scored 32 when Iligan won 92-90 in their first meeting, to only five points.

New recruit Nat Cruz paced the Crusaders of Mayor Lawrence Cruz with 20 points and 15 rebounds, while Harold Sta. Cruz had 14 points, 12 rebounds and three steals.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 84—Basco 23, Bansil 15, Dacia 15, Sampilo 13, Alvarado 9, Gatumbato 7, Alberto 5, Cavan 4, Nicdao 3, Balares 0, Liangco 0.

ILIGAN 71—Cruz 20, Go 17, Sta. Cruz 14, Saladaga 10, Hardin 7, Marata 5, Mangahas 5, Gatchalian 4, Ayodelle 2, Guiyab 0, Magdadaro 0, Kalaw 0.

Quarters: 27-27, 49-46, 71-69, 96-84

Lapena stuns Orcollo; Manalo triumphs

US BASED PINOY AL LAPENA SHOCKED COMPATRIOT DENNIS ORCOLLO, THE REIGNING 2007 ENjoypool.com BCA Open champion, 7-4, to join another Pinoy entry Marlon Manalo in the win column in the Seminole Florida Pro Tour yesterday at the Capones Billiards hall in Spring Hill, Florida. After beating Orcollo, the 2006 World Pool league invitational ruler, Lapena crushed Trevor Braymore, 7-4, Javier Chirino, 7-6, and Donnie Mills, 7-4. In the winner's side 2, Manalo whitewashed Randy Whitehead, 7-0, Paul Song, 7-3, and David Reljic, 7-3, to set up a duel with David Broxson, who defeated Huidje Sey, 7-2.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

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FRANCHISE FIRST

Cavs reach NBA finals

Detroit's defense on James falls into Cleveland's 'Boobie-trap'

CLEVELAND—FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE CLEVELAND CAVAliers are Eastern Conference champions—and on their way to the NBA finals.

Lugging an entire region's hopes with him on every trip to the basket, LeBron James had 20 points and 14 rebounds, and unflappable rookie Daniel Gibson added 31 points—19 in the fourth quarter—to give the Cavaliers a 98-82 victory in Game 6 against the Detroit Pistons.

Cleveland, a city that hasn't celebrated a world championship since 1964, has the next closest thing. And now the Cavs, who won just 17 games the year before James arrived from just down the Interstate in Akron, will meet the San Antonio Spurs in Game 1 of the finals on Thursday night.

James, who scored 48 points in Cleveland's double-overtime win in Game 5, didn't have to carry the Cavs by himself.

Gibson gave him all the help he needed.

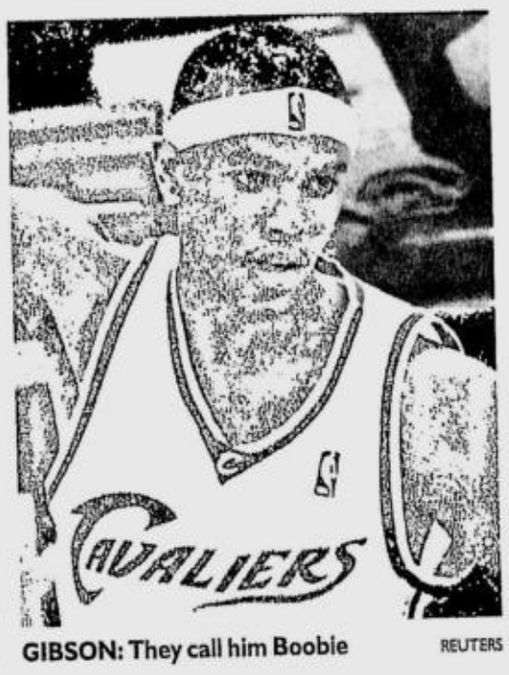
The slender second-round pick from Texas, who didn't become a major contributor until March, outshone his superstar teammate. Gibson made three 3-pointers in the first 2:16 of the fourth and drilled another long-range jumper with 6:52 left, setting off a celebration in Quicken Loans Arena.

The Cavaliers are only third team to come back from an 0-2 deficit in a conference finals, joining the 1971 Baltimore Bullets and 1993 Chicago Bulls.

The season couldn't have ended worse for the top-seeded Pistons, making their fifth straight appearance in the conference finals.

Rasheed Wallace fouled out and then got thrown out after being slapped with two technicals by referee Eddie Rush with 7:44 to play. Rip Hamilton, too, fouled out after scoring 29 points.

The loss could signal an end of an era for the Pistons, with Chauncey Billups (9 points) and Chris Webber (13) both bound for free agency.



GIBSON: They call him Boobie REUTERS

As the final seconds ticked away, James flung the ball into the crowd and jumped into the arms of center Zydrunas Ilgauskas as the Q quaked. The moment had to be particularly sweet for Ilgauskas, the club's 7-foot-3 center who was drafted by the franchise in 1996 and spent two seasons on the sideline with major foot injuries.

With wine-and-gold confetti falling from the rafters, James walked to midcourt to thank Cleveland fans, some of whom were wiping away tears at finally seeing a Cleveland team win something significant.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to me, man," James said, addressing the 20,562 delirious fans. "But look here, look here. It doesn't stop."

Moments later, James was handed the Eastern Conference trophy by Hall of Famer Bill Russell, who had advice for the 22-year-old.

"You are representing the Eastern Conference," the Boston Celtics great said. "Make me proud."

Gibson, the hero of Game 4 when he scored a season-high 21, drained a pair of 3-pointers in the first 1:14 of the fourth quarter, giving the Cavs a 73-67 lead and forcing the Pistons to call time.

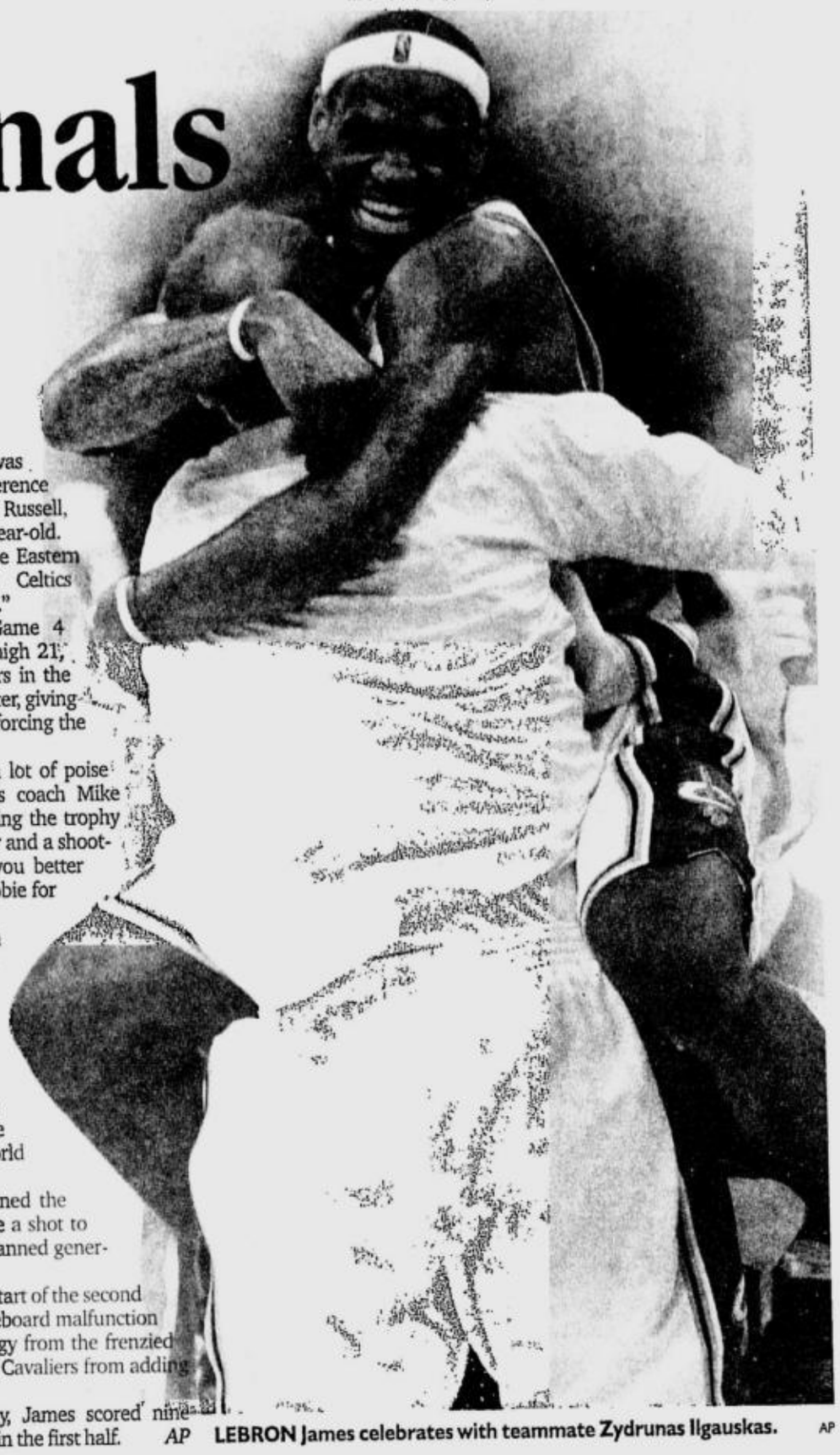
"Boobie is a guy with a lot of poise and a lot of heart," Cavs coach Mike Brown said of Gibson during the trophy presentation. "He's a scorer and a shooter. You leave him alone you better watch out, because it's Boobie for three."

Not since 1964, when the Browns won it all in the pre-Super Bowl days, has a Cleveland team captured a major pro sports title. The Browns lost three straight AFC titles to John Elway and the Denver Broncos, and the Indians haven't won a World Series since 1948.

The Cavaliers, who joined the league in 1970, now have a shot to end a drought that has spanned generations for Cleveland fans.

A lengthy delay at the start of the second quarter because of a scoreboard malfunction drained most of the energy from the frenzied crowd and prevented the Cavaliers from adding to their six-point lead.

Annoyed by the delay, James scored nine points—all free throws—in the first half. AP



LEBRON James celebrates with teammate Zydrunas Ilgauskas. AP

Now it's off to San Antonio for LeBron and Co.

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES AND the Cavaliers can end the city of Cleveland's championship drought. All they have to do is get past a team that's been an expert at winning titles.

The Cavaliers will make their NBA finals debut Thursday in San Antonio (Friday in Manila), where the Spurs have hung three banners since 1999 and will be favored to add another.

San Antonio's Gregg Popovich will be matched up against one of his former assistants. Mike Brown spent three seasons with San Antonio and was on the Spurs' bench when they won the 2003 title.

The Cavaliers selected James later that month with the No. 1 pick in the draft, and he needed only four years to get his team to the NBA's biggest stage.

Cleveland hasn't had a championship team in any major sport since 1964, but has rarely had a player like James, who scored a playoff career-high 48 points, including the Cavs' final 25, in a double-overtime victory in Game 5.

"This is the best thing that ever happened to me, man," James said after the clincher. "But look here. It doesn't stop."

The Cavaliers beat the Spurs in a pair of low-scoring games this season, not surprising because Popovich and Brown are defensive-minded coaches.

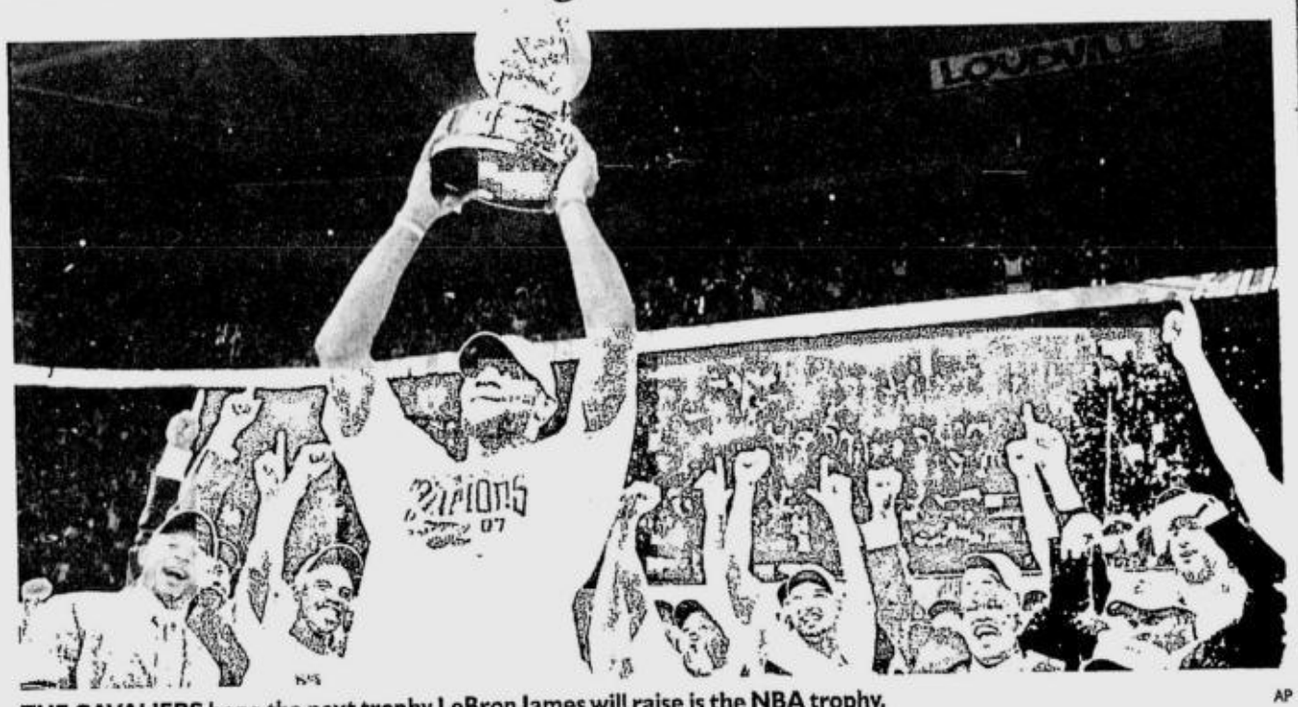
"We have a great relationship, we do talk from time to time," Brown said this week. "He'll call and check up on me, I'll call and ask for advice, he'll call to say 'good win,' or whatever and I'll do the same. But, you know, that's about it.

"I learned a lot from him and I grew a lot while working for him, and I continue to look at him as a mentor and a guy that can help me out."

The Spurs will be the more-rested team, having wrapped up their five-game victory over Utah in the Western Conference finals on Wednesday night. San Antonio took two days off before returning to practice Saturday.

"I spent some time in the pool for the first time in a year," Spurs guard Manu Ginobili said. "It's kind of nice to have a couple of days off. We really enjoyed it, and I think we needed it."

The Spurs, who won titles in 1999, 2003 and 2005, are led by their trio of Tim Duncan, Tony Parker and Ginobili. AP



THE CAVALIERS hope the next trophy LeBron James will raise is the NBA trophy. AP

Ibragimov outpoints Briggs for WBO crown

ATLANTIC CITY, NEW JERSEY—RUSSIA'S Sultan Ibragimov easily outpointed Shannon "The Cannon" Briggs for the WBO title Saturday.

Ibragimov's quick left hands dominated the listless Briggs to earn a 12-round decision.

"Tonight I will go to sleep as champion and will wake up as champion, and we'll see what happens after that," the 32-year-old Ibragimov said.

What happened for Briggs was simple: nothing.

The 35-year-old American pawed and postured, rarely throwing anything dangerous. His performance made his win over Sergei Liakhovich last Nov. 4 for the crown look like a fluke—Briggs scored a last-minute knockout when he was well behind.

There would be no such heroics this time. Ibragimov swept the scorecards, then leaped in the air in the ring when the decision was announced.

"Shannon was a very tough guy,' Ibragimov said charitably. "I had to be real careful, I had to respect Briggs' power. I didn't like that kind of fight and I don't like to fight like that."

Members of former Soviet republics now hold all four heavyweight belts.

Ibragimov joined Ukraine's Wladimir Klitschko (IBF), Kazakstan's Oleg Maskaev (WBC) and Ruslan Chageav of Uzbekistan (WBA) as heavyweight champions. AP

NADAL: 17-for-17 in French Open. AFP

Mauresmo gets boot in 'home' Slam; Nadal continues march

PARIS—TWO-TIME GRAND SLAM champion Amelie Mauresmo was upset in the third round of the French Open on Saturday, losing before her home fans to Lucie Safarova, 6-3, 7-6 (3).

Mauresmo, who won Wimbledon and the Australian Open in 2006, also lost to Safarova while trying to defend her title at Melbourne in January.

"The fact is that there's no miracle today," Mauresmo said. "I mean, I've been struggling for weeks now. Coming here at the French Open, I didn't really know what to expect."

The Frenchwoman has never reached the semifinals at Roland Garros in 13 attempts since her debut in 1995. She said she's still not fit after having her appendix removed in March.

Maria Sharapova reached the fourth round of the French Open for the fourth time. She rallied from 4-1 down in the second set to beat Alla Kudryavtseva, 6-1, 6-4, despite a bothersome right shoulder. Two-time defending champion Rafael Nadal defeated Albert Montanes, 6-1, 6-3, 6-2, in his third-round match.

Mauresmo led 3-0 in each set. But she double-faulted for the eighth time to fall behind 2-0 in the tiebreaker, and a long backhand gave Safarova three match points. Safarova won when Mauresmo returned her serve into the net.

"I was fighting for each point," said Safarova, a Czech seeded 25th. "I never give up."

At 4-3 in the first set, the tournament doctor came on center court to treat Mauresmo, who then left for several minutes to take a medical break. When she returned, the top of her right thigh was wrapped.

"I did not have any particular goal for this tournament because I didn't have enough preparation," Mauresmo said. "You want to give your best in each match, to go to the end. But it was not enough for me today."

Mauresmo reached the quarterfinals in 2003 and 2004 and lost in the fourth round last year. Safarova lost in the first round at Roland Garros in 2005 and 2006.

"I was very nervous at the beginning," Safarova said. "I tried to just concentrate on each point. I tried to come for each point." AP

SHARAPOVA: Hanging tough AP

Pampling takes Memorial lead

DUBLIN, OHIO—ROD PAMPLING FINISHED the storm-delayed third round with a flourish Saturday, holing a 40-foot birdie putt to take the lead and hitting a terrific fairway bunker shot that capped off a 4-under 68, giving him a three-shot lead at the Memorial.

Pampling was just another name on the leaderboard on a gloomy afternoon at Muirfield Village. As daylight began to fade, the Australian began to take charge.

He joined the leaders with a birdie from the bunker on the par-5 11th, just as tournament host Jack Nicklaus and his grandson pulled up in a cart to watch. Pampling went one shot ahead on his slick, bending 40-foot birdie on the 14th.

Adam Scott stayed one shot behind from the 14th with three consecutive up-and-downs, one of them for birdie on the par-5 15th, but he ran out of luck on the 18th for an even-par 72 that left him at 204 along with Sean O'Hair. AP

Cebu pounds Negros; Robles checks Manila

CEBU PEPPERED NEGROS with a barrage of hits early and went to score a 9-4 victory for the solo lead in the second playdate of Baseball Philippines' pilot series at the Rizal Memorial ballpark yesterday.

Earlier, super reliever Jon Jon Robles fanned the first six batters he faced and then held his ground as the Makati Mariners trounced the Manila Sharks, 7-4.

Cebu bombarded the Negros pitching rotation of Joey Guerrero, Ramil Placides and Ernesto Binarao with a total of 17 hits as the Dolphins posted its second straight win.

Asian Games veteran Darwin dela Calsada and Ervick Viandre yielded nine hits to the Roosters but the Dolphins' superior batting, including a combined 12 hits by Fulgencio Rances and Manuel Bacarisas blew Negros away.

Cebu's ominous eight-run binge in the first four innings set the tone of the rout as the Dolphins followed up on its workmanlike 8-0 whipping of Makati in last week's inaugural of the event, presented by Purefoods TJ Hotdog and organized by Community Sports, Inc. (CSI).

"We were hitting well early and that was the key," Cebu coach Isaac Bacarisas said in Filipino.

The left-handed Robles came into the game in place of starter Ruel Batuto after the Sharks had knotted the count at 4-all with a run in the bottom of the sixth inning.

Robles' sterling form lifted the Mariners to their first victory in two games.

"He came in fresh, so I knew he'd deliver," said Makati coach Jeffrey Santiago, also the mentor of reigning UAAP champion University of Santo Tomas, in Filipino.

A day earlier at the same venue, the 21-year-old Robles struck out 16 batters in another relief job as the UST Tigers surged back from 1-5 down to overpower Rizal Technological University, 9-6, in a youth tournament game.

"He's our top guy, and he never gets tired," said Santiago of the this year's UAAP best pitcher awardee and senior Education student.

The Sharks, winner over the the Laguna Tigers, 8-3, last week, joined the Mariners at 1-1 in the five-team tournament sponsored by Gatorade, Harbour Centre, Industrial Enterprises, Inc. and Teleperformance, Inc. and held under the auspices of Major League Baseball of Asia.

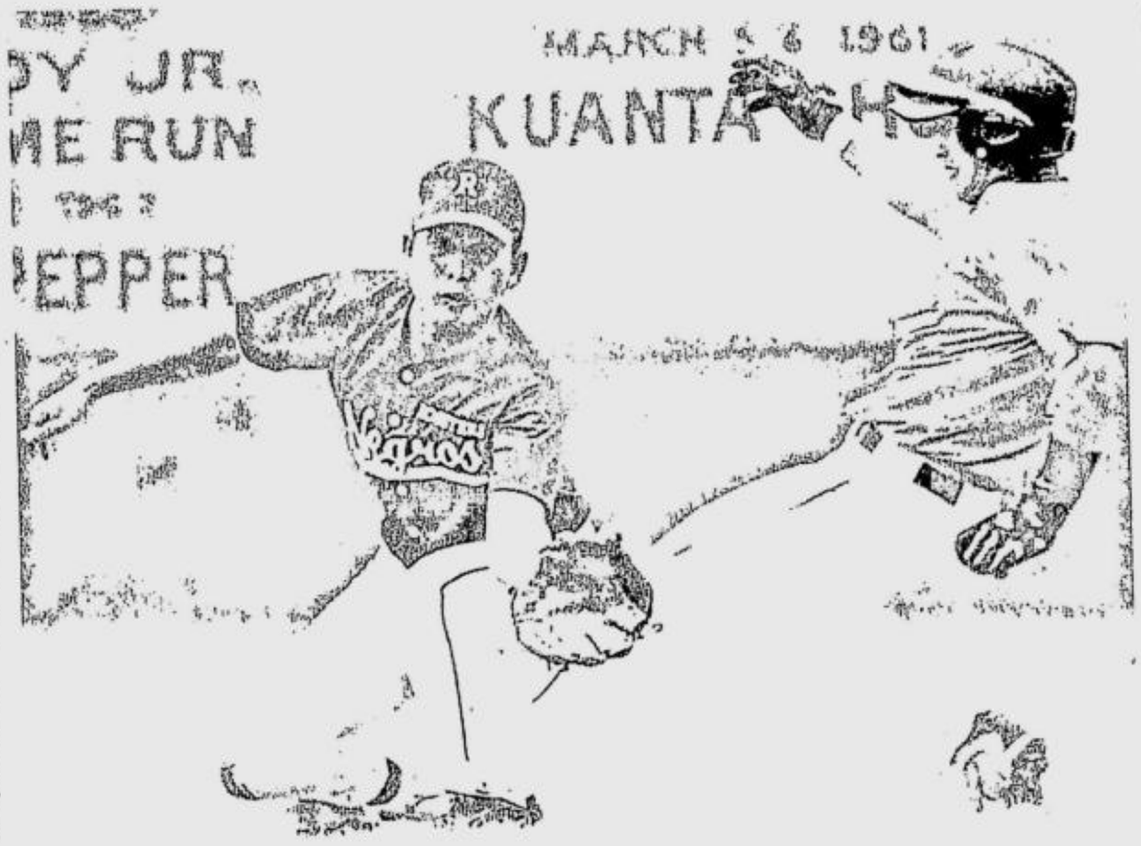
The top finisher after the single round robin series will clash with the No. 4 team in the semifinals while the No. 2 and No. 3 squads collide in the other duel.

The winners will dispute the title in a winner-take-all match.

Linescores:

First Game	R	H	E
MAKATI 220 000 300	7	11	1
MANILA 101 101 000	4	9	3

Second Game	R	H	E
NEGROS 010 030 000	4	9	1
CEBU 303 200 01x	9	17	1



CEBU'S Fulgencio Rances (right) beats the throw to Negros second baseman Jerry Estanislao. BRYAN LIM

Ateneo cagers lead 57 Jr. NBA campers

FIFTY-SEVEN PLAYERS selected from 16 participating schools will be part of the Junior NBA Training Campwhich starts today and ends on Wedensday at the Moro Lorenzo gym at the Ateneo de Manila University in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

BLACK: Clinic host

The camp is the culmination of the inaugural Jr. NBA Philippines program and is headed by chief instructor Frank Lopez, a Jr. NBA coach from the United States.

Lopez will be joined by multiple PBA Best Import awardee and Jr. NBA Philippines program director Norman Black.

The best six campers will form the Jr. NBA Philippine All-Star Team and will be invited to watch an NBA game live in the 2007-2008 season.

The 12 team members of the Ateneo, the champions of the inaugural tournament held last May 16-18 at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati City, automatically gained berths in the camp.

The remaining 45 campers will be selected based on nominations received from representatives of each participating school.

Apart from basketball skills, the nominees must have good academic records and be active in their communities.

Lopez and Black are to hold a unique training program based on actual exercises and drills used by NBA teams.

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Mammoth cast in King of the Road races

A MAMMOTH TOTAL CAST OF 50,000 WILL dispute the Adidas King of the Road (KOTR) races to be held simultaneously in 10 cities across the country on July 1.

Registration starts today for the races in Metro Manila, and the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Laoag, Puerto Princesa, San Fernando in La Union, Tacloban and Tarlac.

Adidas sports marketing manager Goody Custodio said the races will be fired off at 6 a.m. with the Metro Manila edition set to be started in front of the Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park.

Cash prizes and Adidas gift certificates await the top finishers in the Metro Manila KOTR and the 21K centerpiece event.

Participants in the unprecedented multi-race event run will get the Adidas running singlets upon registration.

Metro Manila runners may register at the Vasquez Madrigal Building at 51 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Monday to Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The fee is P250 and will be on a first-come first-served basis.

Competition in Metro Manila will be in the 5K, 10K and the 21K, while the events in the provinces are 3K and 5K.

Registration fees for the provincial races is P150.

Registration centers in the provinces: Cagayan de Oro City, Pelaez Sports Center, organized by Meg Llamera; Tarlac City, Tarlac City Hall, organized by City Sports Development Office; Tacloban City, Provincial Engineer's Office, organized by Neil Baronda; San Fernando City, La Union, San Fernando City Hall, organized by Joseph Dumuk; Puerto Princesa, Bodega Site Computer Center, organized by the Palawan Chamber of Commerce and Industries; Davao, Gaisano Mall, organized by Vic Sai; Laoag, Marcos Sports Stadium, organized by Ilocos Norte Sports Development Council; Cebu, Cebu City Sports Complex, organized by Ricky Ballesteros; and Iloilo, Iloilo City Hall, organized by the Youth and Development Division.

SPORTSWATCH

LITTLE OLYMPICS: National organizers of the 2007 Milo Little Olympics put their hands together for the biggest multi-sport competition among the country's young athletes. Nestle SVP and business executive manager Eugene David and Milo AVP for sports events Pat Goc-ong (third and fourth from left, respectively) are teaming up for the staging of the games with (from left) Visayas organizer Ricky Ballesteros, Luzon's Tess Bernardino, Mindanao's Megs Llamera and Metro Manila's Jovy Mamawal. Now on its 20th year, the Milo Little Olympics is expected to draw 19,000 primary and secondary students from about 800 schools.

SJC International Derby draws more entries

THE PRESTIGIOUS SJC 8-COCK INTERNATIONAL DERBY HAS ATTRACTED a banner field of 100 local and foreign participants one week before the event kicks off the San Juan Coliseum. Slated June 11, 13 and 15 and with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as major sponsor, the derby dangles a guaranteed prize of P5 million, the biggest cash pot this season. Participants must submit entries on Sunday from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 725-5369 and 725-6563 or 0917-8041691. The long list of competitors includes 2007 GCAP Cocker of the Year winners Pol Estrellado and Totoy Haruta, Benjie Lim, Louie Cua and Dori Du of Davao, Patrick Antonio and Raymond Velayo. The visitors will be bannered famous Sweater man Bruce Barnette, Jeff Hudspeth, Floyd Crowe Graves, Hervy Rubio, Dan Gray, Richard Borris, Richard Lalnie and Jerry Douglas

PCAP 5-cocker kicks off at Makati Coliseum

THE EXCITING BATTLES AMONG METRO MANILA'S FINEST COCKFIGHTERS resumes at 5 p.m. today via the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum. The 70-fight program, the 11th leg of the PCAP series, is sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador. Last Friday, the entry SM Scorpio of partners Sam Mendoza and Ricky Valencia of Rizal topped the Makati Invitational 8-Cock Derby after posting a 7-1 win-loss record. Runners-up with six wins each were Boy Marzo (TNT BMRR Riyadh), William Co (Spencer June 8), Nato Lacson (Top of the World), Rudy Diestro (Sta. Martha), Jun Pascual (Tranka Bay and Selamat Datang) and the Joker A entry. Meanwhile, the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. and William Co will host the Spencer 5-Cock Derby on Friday with P1 million in guaranteed prize at stake.

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SPORTS

CHAMP: Chony Santos (center) receives her trophy from tournament chair Dionne Cu after capturing the Class A crown in the recent Highlands Ladies Cup at the Midlands Golf Course in Tagaytay. At left is Highlands Ladies Chapter president Rosalind Wee.

SEAG finalizes venues for next three Games

By June Navarro

THE HOSTING OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN Games for the next six years is already cast in stone.

The SEAG Federation Council yesterday awarded the next three editions of the biennial conclave to Laos, Indonesia and Singapore.

Thailand is hosting the 25th SEA Games in December.

The federation, made up of representatives from the 10 member countries, will bring the Games to Laos in 2009—the first time the socialist republic and former French colony will host a sporting event of such magnitude.

Indonesia, which has hosted the Games several times since its formation in 1959, will take its turn in 2011 before Singapore holds the competitions two decades after its last turn in 1993.

The council meeting also boosted the Philippines' stock in the coming Thailand Games.

From 441 events, the council increased the total to 488.

Happily reincluded in the roster of competitions are several in which the defending champion Filipinos have good chances of landing a medal, according to Philippine Olympic Committee vice president Monico Puentevella said.

"We got more than what we wanted," the former Bacolod representative told the INQUIRER in a text message. "The details of which events were included, however, will be announced tomorrow (today) after the council confirms it."

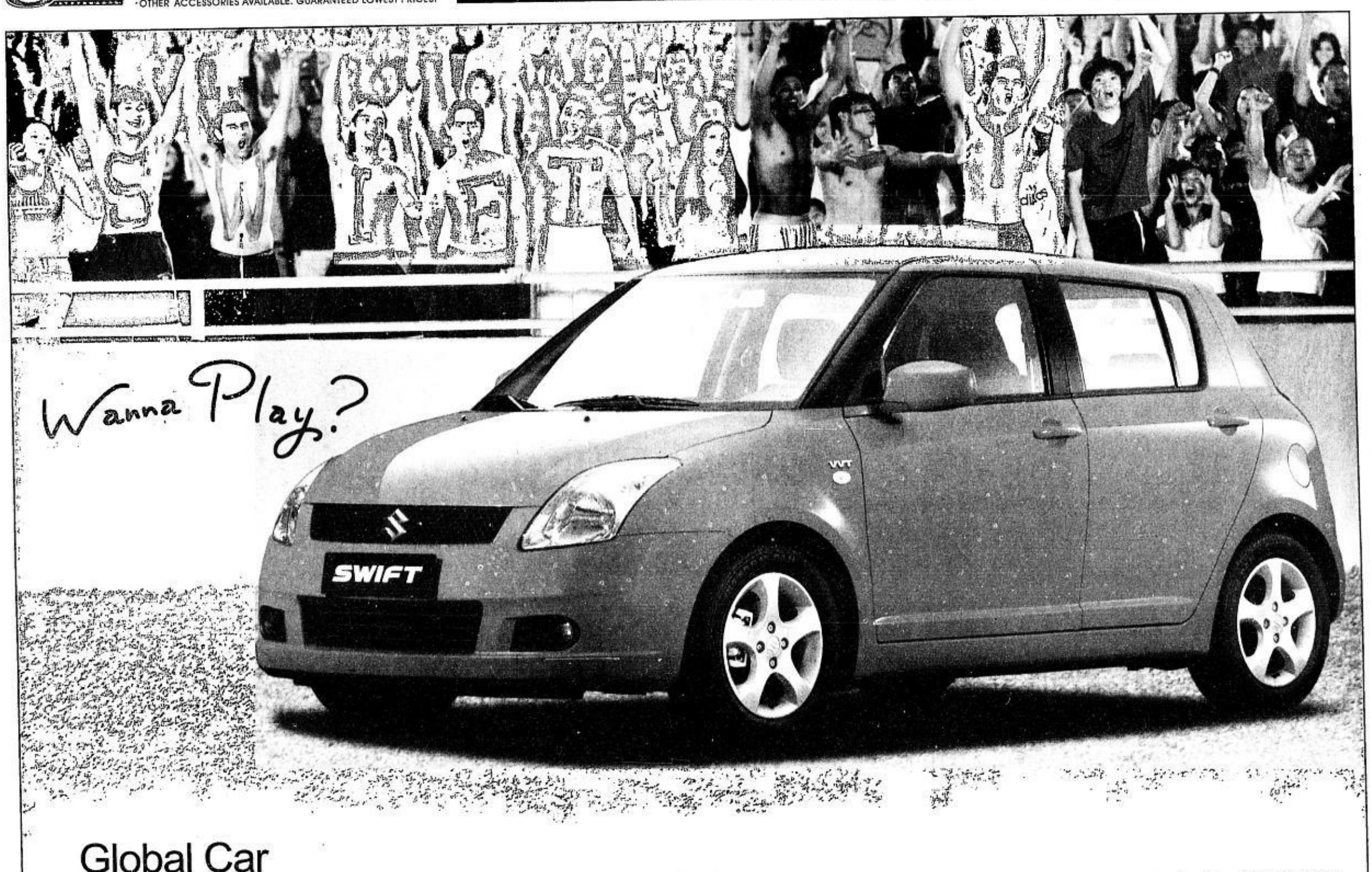
Filipino officials attended the meeting, held in Nakron Ratchassima, Thailand, in full force.

They were there to lobby for the inclusion of 24 events where Filipino athletes won gold medals in the 2005 Manila SEAG.

POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros said the meeting went on for four hours before the hosts agreed to increase the number of events.

Before the Philippine delegation left, the officials made a vow to lobby for additional events in wushu, traditional boat race and shooting, among others.

From 22 gold medals in 2005, wushu's medal stake was reduced to 12 while traditional boat race, where Filipino rowers swept the six golds two years ago, will dangle only two gold medals in Thailand.



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Metrobank to build RP's tallest hotel

66-storey, ₱20-B structure to rise in Global City

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PROPERTY UNIT OF THE METROBANK GROUP plans to build the country's tallest building which will also house a five-star hotel as part of its move to capitalize on the booming tourism business.

Sources familiar with the project revealed that Federal Land Inc. would build a 66-storey structure whose upper 20 floors would be occupied by a 350-room hotel.

The mixed-use complex would be built on the 27-hectare North Bonifacio district inside Fort Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. owns 10.4 hectares of this property, while the remaining 16 odd hectares belong to the state-owned Bases Con-

METROBANK / B4

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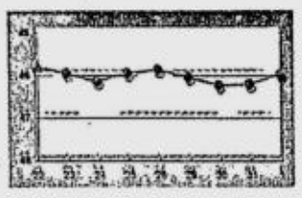

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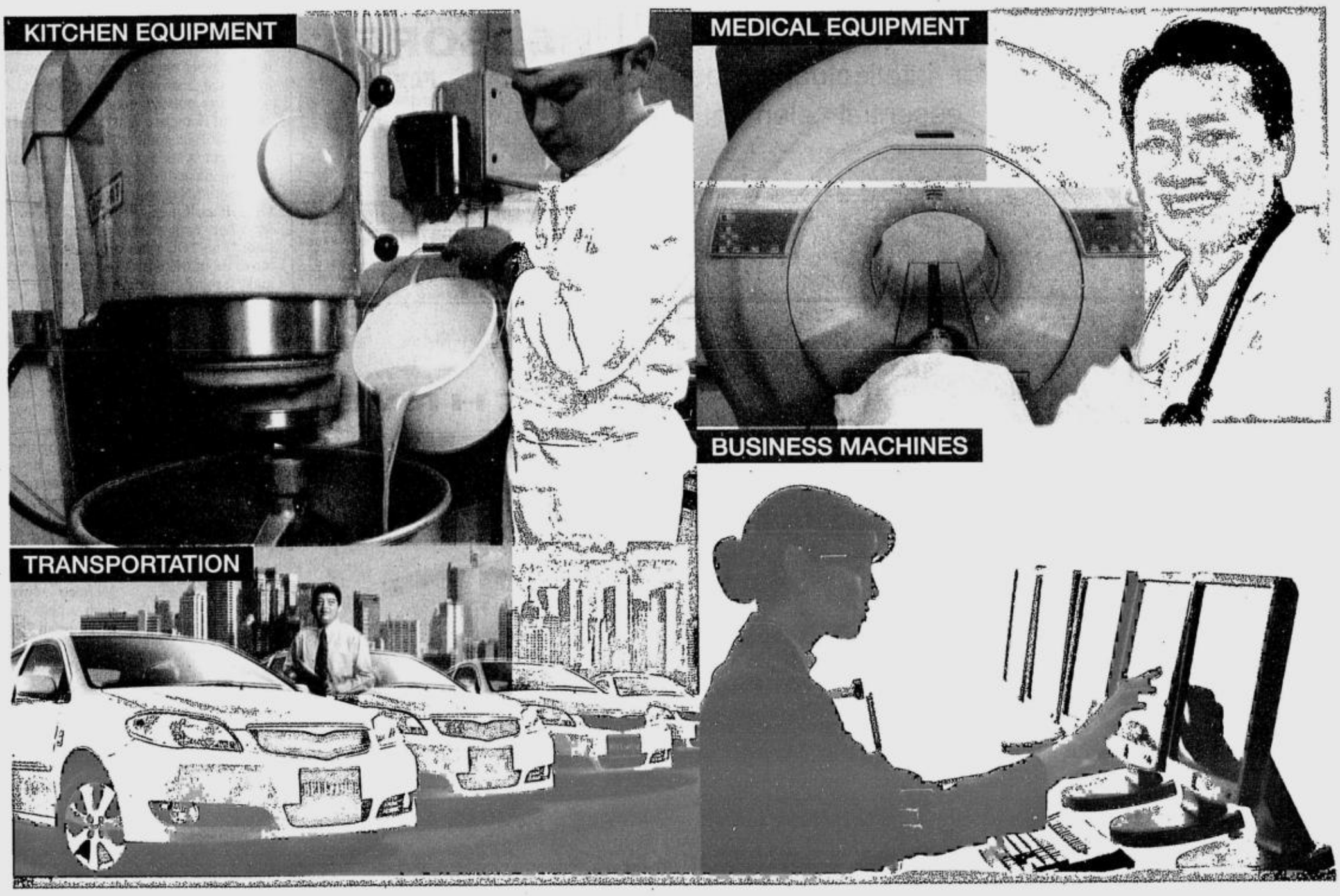

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POWER COST REDUCTION

Gov't urged to cut royalties on gas, geothermal steam

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS COUNcil has asked the government to cut down the royalties it collects from power plants that are run on natural gas and geothermal energy if it hopes to reduce power costs and attract investors to local industries.

According to the Philippine Exporters Confederation, the NCC's working group on the energy sector reported that, three years after the mandated opening up of markets to competition under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira), "real open access" has yet to attained.

Open access means that electricity markets, rather than the previous set up of monopolies, are open to more service providers.

Philexport, where the private and public sectors are represented, is active in the NCC, which is co-chaired by Trade Secretary Peter Favila and his predecessor Cesar Bautista.

"It also found that a big slice of (high power costs) are royalties or shares from earnings the government has been taking from geothermal plants across the country, and the big power plants in Luzon that are fueled by natural gas from Malampaya," Philexport said.

Royalties are collected because the natural gas, a form of petroleum, from Malampaya, as well as volcanic heat—from areas such as Makiling-Banahaw, Bacun-Manito and Tiwi in Luzon; Leyte in the Visayas; and Mt. Apo in Mindanao—are considered properties of the state, since these are tapped from deep underground reservoirs.

Geothermal power plants account for a total of some 1,875 megawatts of installed capacity, while the three natural gas-fed plants in Batangas represent 2,700 MW.

"The high royalties have jacked up the generation cost of power to levels only slightly lower than Japan," Philexport said, adding this is one factor that has been driving down the country's global competitiveness.

The council's energy working group recommended that royalties be cut for at least four years starting this year as an immediate way to bring down power costs.

Also, the NCC said that, for royalty reduction to effectively help drive down costs of manufacturing and other energy-consuming economic activities, the result should be power rate reductions of between 10 percent and 30 percent of current prices.

Further, the NCC working group recommended that, as a way of encouraging voluntary open access that would promote power rate cuts, the Manila Electric Co. should not be forced to commit to fixed volumes of purchases from the National Power Corp.

"A recently implemented customer choice program for companies with average monthly consumption of at least one megawatt failed to take off because of the imposition of fixed volume of power bought at wholesale prices," Philexport said.

Also, the NCC working group called for changes in the Epira's provision that direct purchases from large power consumers could only be allowed after Napocor has sold at least 70 percent of its generating capacity.

"So far, (Napocor has privatized) a few of those plants," Philexport said. "Council members observed that nothing will happen in reducing power rates in years if we (stick to the requirement)."

Meralco seeks lower power rates for Customer Choice Program

By Abigail L. Ho

TO MAKE ITS BULK POWER SALES PROGRAM more attractive to customers, the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. is asking the National Power Corp. to offer lower rates tailored for entities who will avail of the Customer Choice Program (CCP).

Meralco president and chief operating officer Jesus Francisco said that instead of just offering CCP customers Napocor's time-of-use (TOU) rates, special rates could be offered to them to make the scheme more attractive.

"We told Napocor that maybe they can offer CCP customers the rates that they will offer when open access is implemented," he said. "The TOU rates are not very attractive for some of the customers. We have to try to make it more attractive to them."

Francisco said customers are "not signing up for the program because they're waiting for a better rate structure."

"They're hesitating because they don't want to be tied down to the program for six months," he added. "The savings they will generate from TOU rates are not big enough to attract them."

The CCP allows Meralco customers with a peak demand of at least 750 kilowatts a month to take advantage of Napocor's TOU rates.

The TOU scheme provides Napocor customers with flexible hourly rates that are lowest during off-peak hours, or between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m., and highest during peak hours, or from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Sundays and holidays are also considered off-peak times.

Rates are also lower during the wet season, or from July to December, as electricity demand usually falls during this time due to the colder weather. Hydroelectric plants are also able to produce more power during these months.

Industrial users can opt to shift their loads to off-peak hours to take advantage of lower rates.

The CCP aims to enable large power users to avail themselves of lower electricity rates and to address the looming power supply problem.

Meralco currently has only one customer under the CCP—Japanese firm Futaba Corp. Philippines.

STATEMENT OF APOLOGY

I, Jon Patrick C. Chan, am a former employee of SYKES ASIA, INC. and a partner of iSpeak Consultants Co., with address at 708B2 Wack-Wack Twin Towers, Wack-Wack Road, Mandaluyong City.

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RP tax effort down to 12.2% in first quarter

15% target for '07 seen hard to meet

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S TAX EFFORT DROPPED TO 12.2 percent in the first quarter from 13 percent in the same period a year ago, derailing the government's objective of bringing the figure back to pre-Asian crisis levels.

Tax effort, a closely watched economic indicator, is the ratio between the national government's tax and duty collection, and the country's gross domestic product. It measures the government's ability to increase the collection of revenues commensurate with the growth of the economy.

Government data showed that the tax effort of 12.2 percent was a result of the P185.6 billion worth of tax and duty collections, and the P1.52 trillion worth of gross domestic product. GDP is the sum of the value of all goods produced and services rendered in an economy in a given period.

The first-quarter tax effort dropped because the rate of increase in tax collections was slower than the growth of the economy.

In nominal terms, the GDP in the first quarter was 10 percent higher than the P1.38 trillion recorded in the same period last year. In real terms, or when inflation is factored out, the economy grew 6.9 percent in the first quarter, the highest in 17 years.

The growth was attributed to increased government spending and higher household consumption, which was aided by the slowdown in inflation, the decline in interest rates and strengthening of the peso.

But while the economy grew rapidly, the increase in tax collection was only minimal. The combined revenue collection of the BIR and the BOC in the first quarter was only 3.4 percent higher than the P179.43 billion recorded a year ago.

The first-quarter tax-collection performance placed the government off track to meeting its target of a 15.2-percent tax effort by the end of this year.

The government's fiscal managers were aiming at bringing back the tax effort to 17 percent over the medium term. The tax effort of 17 percent was last recorded in 1997, or before the Asian financial crisis.

After the crisis, tax effort dropped steadily to the 12-percent level. It started rising in 2005 when it settled at 13 percent and then at 14.3 percent last year.

The BIR said the lower-than-expected collection of taxes was partly due to factors beyond its control. It cited the drop in interest rate, which resulted in lower income from bank deposits and therefore lower collection income tax.

MVP reappointed FirstPac managing director, CEO

SHAREHOLDERS OF FIRST PACIFIC CO. Ltd. passed a resolution reappointing Manuel Pangilinan as managing director and chief executive officer.

Pangilinan is the chair of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Also passed was the reelection of all other First Pacific directors whose terms had expired based on normal rotation.

Shareholders also renewed the existing general mandate for the the company's board to implement a share buyback and approved a general mandate for the company to issue new shares.

In a statement, First Pacific said its board would maintain the flexibility to pursue these options if either becomes necessary and appropriate based on changing circumstances in the future.

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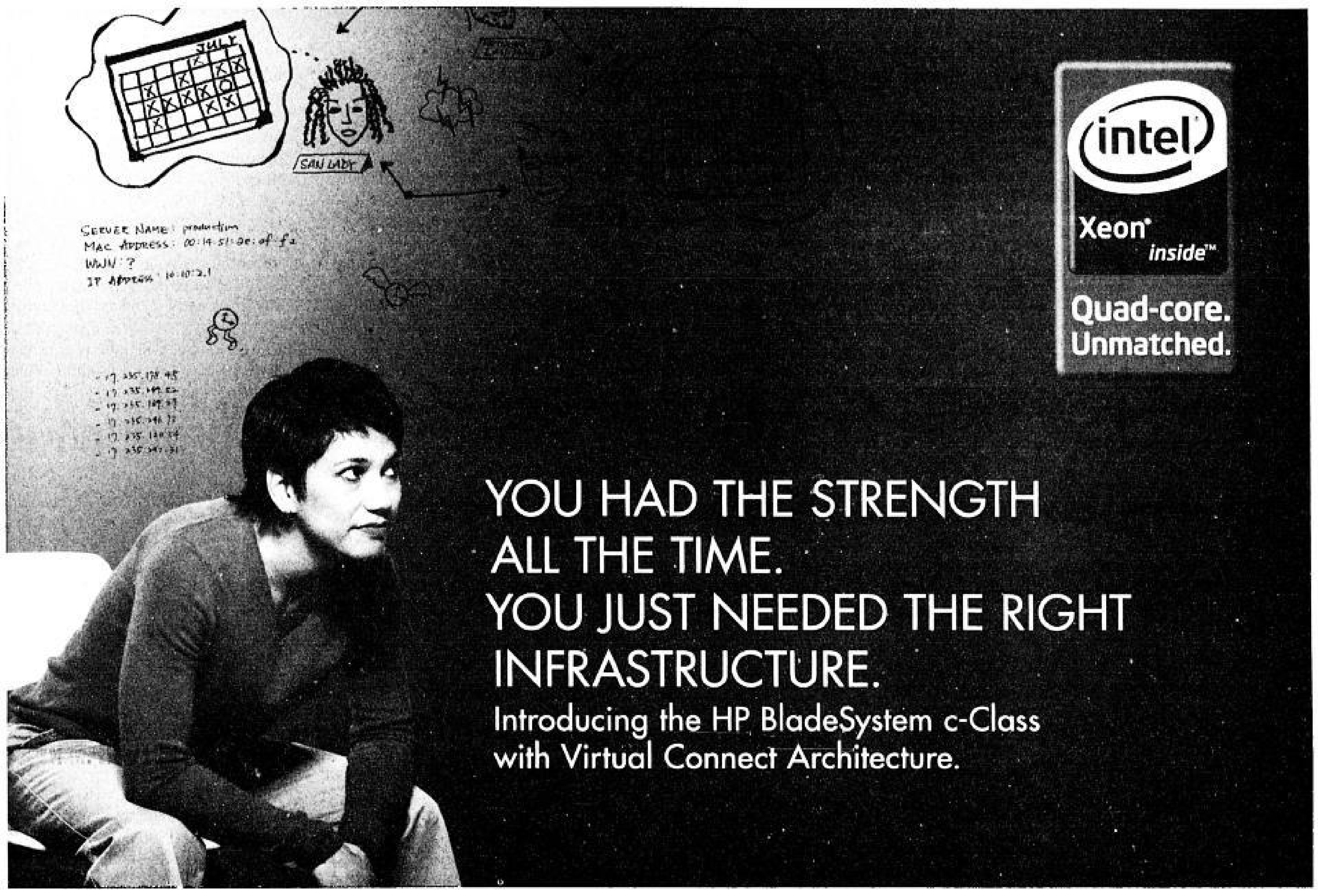
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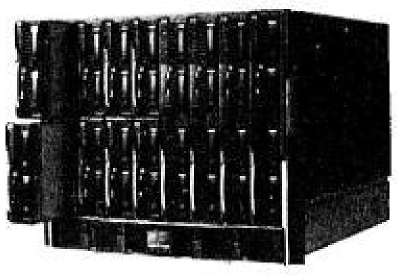
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DBM urges shift in agri department's rice policy

Goal of rice self-sufficiency described to be 'illusory'

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND Management has questioned the country's policy of attaining "rice sufficiency" via costly market interventions, which only resulted in losses by the billions of pesos.

Confidential DBM documents, which outlined a proposed budget strategy for 2008 to 2010, showed a call for institutional reforms in the Department of Agriculture and attached agencies National Food Authority and National Irrigation Authority.

"The Philippines has a comparative disadvantage in rice growing, and rice self-sufficiency is both costly and illusory," the DBM paper said.

To improve the composition and quality of public expenditures and investments, the DBM called for a policy shift away from rice sufficiency to "supply-led stabilization."

It also urged a reduction in the tariff rate on the main staple to 30 percent and changes in the DA's expenditures.

According to the paper, the NFA's market intervention only has a limited effect, "but it has accumulated losses of P24 billion as of end-2005."

By the end of this year, the DBM estimated that NFA would accumulate P72.4 billion worth of debt. And if the NFA were to stick to the present policy, its debt could further balloon to P136 billion by 2010. This would translate to P8.8 billion in annual debt servicing after 2010.

"National fiscal sustainability will be seriously at risk," the DBM warned. "(It can) impact on the national government's international borrowing and interest rate."

To improve the composition and quality of public expenditures and investments, the DBM suggested a shift from "rice sufficiency" to "supply-led stabilization" through the following measures:

- Gradual reduction of subsidies to inputs (production support and irrigation development, which are biased towards rice);
- Gradual increase in expenditures on public goods;
- Refocus existing public investments in irrigation;
- Enhance water management and NIA's operations; and,
- Address weaknesses in research and development and agricultural extension services institutional framework.

Under the proposal, the NFA will be allowed to maintain its market intervention with a set annual price ceiling and tax subsidy.

But the NFA must reduce its workforce by at least 1,000. It must also allow traders to import rice by tendering the estimated annual import quota on a regular basis.

In addition to reducing and refinancing the NFA's debt, now the biggest contributor to the consolidated public sector deficit, the DBM said the government must also ensure the agency would have an adequate capital base to be commercially viable.

The DBM said rice was taking a 60-percent share of the DA's public expenditure versus a 16-percent contribution to gross domestic product, while rural poverty remained a persistent policy issue.

It noted that the rice sufficiency program had been "welfare reducing," with welfare losses significantly exceeding welfare gains by an average of P50 billion a year, with very little of producers' gains accruing to the poor rice farm households.

Over the long term, the DBM said a "structural adjustment assistance package" must be given to rice farmers, funding for which would come from tariff and savings from budget subsidies to the NFA.

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Animal health group declares RP to be free of FMD

By Amy R. Remo

THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR Animal Health has recently reaffirmed the country to be free from the dreaded foot-and-mouth disease during the 75th annual general session of the International Committee held in Paris, France last month.

At the sidelines of the North Food Caravan Harvest, Bureau of Animal Industry Director Davinio Catbagan said that the OIE again has declared Visayas, Mindanao, Masbate and Palawan to be totally free of FMD.

Visayas and Mindanao have been declared as FMD-free for more than a decade now, and Luzon, for more than a year.

According to Catbagan, the department is now preparing and working on getting the National Capital Region, Batangas, Bulacan, Laguna and Nueva Ecija to be declared as FMD-free.

"If no FMD-related incidents happen in the next six months, we are ready to lodge our application to the OIE by January next year and then wait for the results by May 2008 when the committee reconvenes," said Catbagan.

He added that the BAI would need P50 million to fund its programs to ensure that the country would stay free of FMD.

One of its programs is the strengthening quarantine controls.

Another would focus on the NCR and the four provinces by monitoring all movements and transfers of animals from one province to another and putting up strategic checkpoints to ensure that no unchecked animal will be smuggled to and fro.

Catbagan added that they are strengthening their information campaign drive, as well as their ties with local government units.

"If we can pass the May 2008 deliberations, then the whole country can be declared FMD-free, and that's something we can take advantage of," said Catbagan.

As it is, the country has already reaped the benefits of having some of its areas declared as totally FMD free.

For this year, the Department of Agriculture already expects the country's hog industry to grow 3.5 percent as it expects a rise in trade of Philippine meat products with Singapore, Russia, Japan, Mexico, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan and other Asian countries.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap earlier said that, aside from frozen meat, the department sees eight processed meat items to start penetrating the global market this year as the Philippines moves closer to being declared totally free of FMD by the OIE.

The processed products are luncheon meat, spam, pork and beans, *lechon paksiw*, pork *adobo*, *sisig*, chili con carne and *bistik tagalog*.

"Singapore is willing to accept Philippine exports of fresh, frozen meat, subject to certain conditions, which are being worked out," Yap said. "We are looking at Japan, which is the world's top meat importer, as another major market for our meat exports."

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Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	1,500,000
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	350,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls. Call
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Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	80,000/130,000*
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Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
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Makati Sports Club A/B*	200,000/230,000*	180,000
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	150,000
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
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Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	650,000
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The Country Club	2,200,000	-
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Conflict in gov't production data rooted out

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL COORdination Board (NSCB) has shed light on the growing confusion over the true state of the country's manufacturing industry—production of which was reported to be growing by a robust rate in one government survey, while in another official report, it was said to be on the decline.

According to the Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries (Missi), conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector had been posting a year-on-year decline in production since January, raising concerns among the business sector.

According to the Missi, volume of production by manufacturers dropped 7.6 percent in March from a year ago. In January and February, production volumes also dropped 0.4 percent and 13.9 percent year-on-year, respectively.

But according to the National Accounts of the Philippines, which is computed by the NSCB, the sector had actually been contributing positively to the country's economy, which posted a 6.9-percent growth in the first quarter—the highest in 17 years.

The National Accounts said the manufacturing sector grew by 4.6 percent in the first quarter from that of the same period a year ago, and by a similar margin for the full year of 2006.

The discrepancy between the two surveys raised doubts on the accuracy of the government's statistical reports. But the NSCB said the difference was actually a result of diverse sampling methods.

VIROLA

Romulo Virola, secretary general of the NSCB, said the Missi includes only "organized" manufacturing firms in its samples. He said "organized" firms are those that are either registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and belonged to the manufacturing industry's association.

On the other hand, the National Accounts takes a wider sample for computing the performance of the manufacturing sector, and includes the so-called "disorganized" industry members.

He explained that "disorganized" manufacturers are those that are not registered with the SEC and are mostly doing production at home.

Virola said the Missi was correct in representing the performance of upscale firms. On the other hand, the reported performance in the National Accounts represents the state of both small and large-scale manufacturing firms.

But while saying none of the two reports were incorrect, Virola added that there was an ongoing program to update the samples of the Missi.

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Metrobank to build RP's tallest hotel

From page B1

version and Development Authority (BCDA).

The building's lower floors would also house high-grade office space, while a pair of 40-storey residential towers would also be built beside it.

Federal Land chair Alfred Ty said the entire complex would cost approximately P20 billion.

In an interview, Tourism Sec. Ace Durano lauded the initiative, saying it would further boost the tourism industry.

"The taipans are all investing in tourism now," he said, referring to the country's richest Chinese-Filipino businessmen. "The fact that they're investing in the hospitality business is a big vote of confidence."

The Metrobank Group already has a small footprint in the tourism business through its hotel in Cebu City managed by the Marco Polo chain.

Its most recent foray into the booming sector, however, follows the move of other conglomerates, like SM Investment Corp.'s launch of its P5-billion Hamilo Coast tourism project and Ayala Land Inc.'s P7.4-billion deal with Saudi-owned Kingdom Hotel Investments for a three-hotel complex in Makati City.

"I have always said that if we couldn't convince our own taipans to invest in tourism, then we wouldn't be able to convince other investors to come in," Durano said.

Once completed, the entire complex would have a total floor area of 140,000 square meters. The hotel venture is part of a master plan being developed by Hellmuth, Obata & Kassabaum Inc. International Ltd.

AN ARTIST'S concept of the proposed 66-storey establishment and adjoining structures.

The tourism chief said that the Metrobank Group's project would ease the problem of lack of hotel rooms, which is one of the two main bottlenecks in the industry, the other being the lack of airline seats into and out of the country.

"If we address these bottlenecks, we could easily achieve 10 to 15 million arrivals each year," he said.

Durano pointed out that the rising number of tourist arrivals have already resulted in the smoothening out of occupancy rates in Metro Manila, virtually eliminating peaks and troughs experienced in the past.

He added that this has also resulted in the "over-utilization" of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 1 by as much as 167 percent, making the opening of the mothballed Terminal 3 even more urgent.

Retirement fund stake in SMC up to 10.16%

Recent acquisitions boosted holdings

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SAN MIGUEL CORP. RETIREMENT PLAN SAID it had raised its holdings in San Miguel Corp. to 10.16 percent or a total of 320.45 million shares, with the recent additional purchase of 56.68 million class B shares, company corporate secretary Francis Jardeleza said.

Based on the company's top 100 stockholder's report earlier filed with the stock exchange, SMC Retirement Plan previously owned 2.3 percent of class B SMC shares and 1.03 percent of class A shares.

Class B shares are those that can be held by foreign investors.

SMC Retirement Plan manages the pension fund of employees of SMC.

"With the increased shareholding, SMC Retirement Plan assumes the status of a substantial shareholder of the company," Jardeleza said.

In an ownership report sent to the stock exchange, SMC Retirement Plan said it had accumulated a total of 320 million SMC shares, composed of 224.35 million class A shares (7.12 percent) and 95.7 million class B shares (3.04 percent) from March 19 to May 18 this year.

The deals were valued at roughly P19.38 billion.

Included in those deals was the 6.percent held by state pension fund Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), which SMC Retirement Plan bought at P71.50 per share or a total of P14.25 billion.

It also acquired 56.68 million class B shares held by companies controlled by SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco, Jr. at P85 per share for a total of P4.82 billion.

Smaller acquisition deals during the period also included a total of 4.29 million A and B shares valued at P307.78 million.

SMC needs two-thirds vote from shareholders to allow it to dive into new investments outside of the food and beverage sector to grow its profits. The company earlier announced an ambitious plan to foray into new high growth businesses such as power generation or transmission, water, other utilities, mining and infrastructure.

ETPI sets aside P600M for capex

EASTERN TELECOMMUNICATION PHILIPPINES Inc. (ETPI), a 57.7-percent owned subsidiary of listed firm ISM Communications Inc., is spending P600 million to transform itself into a next generation telecommunications provider, ISM president Eric Recto said.

Last year, ETPI's capital expenditure amounted to P129 million. This was used primarily in replacing its local exchange carrier switches with next generation networking technology.

NGN is a broad term to describe key architectural evolutions in telecommunication core and access networks that will be deployed over the next five to 10 years, Internet literature showed.

"ETPI has invested in an NGN core by Nokia. There will be additional capex in NGN to convert the traditional system of telephony into an information technology (IT) telecommunication technology," Recto said.

ETPI is engaged in the operation, installation and establishment of commercial telecommunication, point-to-point domestic inter-island and international communications and other telecommunications services.

ETPI made a dramatic turn around in 2006 after six years of losses and reported a profit of P31 million. In 2005, the company's losses reached P540 million.

ETPI's favorable performance was driven mainly by massive cost savings program, corporate reorganization, restructuring of overdue loans and settlement of vendor claims and dividend income from ETPI's investment in a cable ship operator.

Part of the funds for ETPI's capital requirement will come from a stock right offer of ISM, that aims to fetch P300 million from the sale of stock rights.

ISM plans to acquire an additional 10-20 percent in ETPI with some proceeds from the stock rights offer. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

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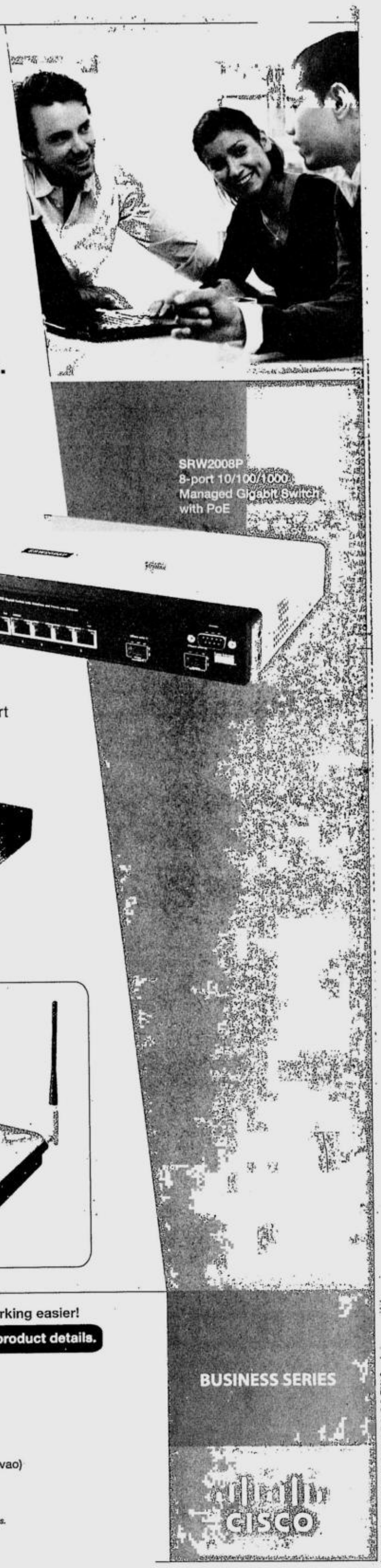

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepEd DIVISION OF PAMPANGA, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Supply and Delivery of Elem. / Sec. Armchair w/ Teacher's Tables w/ Chairs
Location : DepEd Division of Pampanga
Brief Description :

Package A (1st Congressional District)	1,497 pcs. Elem. / Sec. Armchairs All wood 30 pcs. Teacher's Tables w/ chairs	P 1,167,660.00
Package B (2nd Congressional District)	2,620 pcs. Elem. / Sec. Armchairs All wood w/ 52 pcs. Teacher's Tables w/ chairs	P 2,043,600.00
Package C (3rd Congressional District)	2,573 pcs. Elem. / Sec. Armchairs All wood w/ 51 pcs. Teacher's Tables w/ chairs	P 2,006,940.00
Package D (4th Congressional District)	3,156 pcs. Elem./Sec. Armchairs All wood w/ 63 pcs. Teacher's Tables w/ chairs	P 2,461,680.00

ABC & Funding Source : GOP
Contract Duration : 120 days
Delivery Period : 90 days

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 9184. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC Activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
Issuance of Bidding Documents	June 4-11, 2007	Adm. Office, Div. of Pampanga, City of San Fernando (P)
Pre Bid Conference	June 15, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	Div. of Pampanga, City of San Fernando (P)
Submission & Opening of Bids	June 29, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	Adm. Office, Div. of Pampanga, City of San Fernando (P)
Bid Evaluation	July 4, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	Adm. Office, Div. of Pampanga, City of San Fernando (P)
Post Qualification	July 9, 2007, 2:00 p.m.	Adm. Office, Div. of Pampanga, City of San Fernando (P)
Preparation & Approval of Resolution to Award	July 13, 2007	
Notice of Award	July 16, 2007	
Contract Preparation	July 23, 2007	
Notice to Proceed	July 25, 2007	
Contract of Implementation	July 26, 2007	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P2,000.00 per Package** to the DepEd Division of Pampanga Cashier.

The DepEd Division of Pampanga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The DepEd DIVISION OF PAMPANGA BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **NICOLAS T. CAPULONG, Ph.D.**
Asst. Schools Division Superintendent
BAC Chairman

(PDI – June 4, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
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A. Mabini St., Tacloban City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Leyte Metropolitan Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : Construction of 92.0 LM Depth, 250mmØ Production Well (CW-07-002) consisting of 3 components: (A) Test Well, (B) Production Well, and (C) Structures/Equipment
Location : San Fernando Elementary School, Real St., Tacloban City
Brief Description : Supply of Labor, Materials, Equipment and Supervision for the above-named Project. The prosecution/implementation of components (2) & (3) shall be dependent on the result of component (1)
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P 5,256,779.00
Contract Duration : 200 CALENDAR DAYS

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License with a registration particular in Water Supply, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	on or before June 15, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	on or before June 15, 2007
3. Receipt and Opening of Eligibility Requirements	June 20, 2007
4. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 21 – June 27, 2007
5. Pre-bid Conference	July 5, 2007; 10:00 a.m.
6. Receipt and Opening of Bids	July 17, 2007; 10:00 a.m.

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at LMWD Main Office, A. Mabini St., Tacloban City, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the LMWD Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00) to the LMWD Cashier.

The Leyte Metropolitan Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **VIOLETA C. SIMBULAN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – June 4 & 11, 2007)

A BRIGHT PROSPECT FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT!!!

(an affiliate in Malaysia is in urgent need of the following person:)

- College level / Graduate Majoring in Electrical/Electronic field
- Must be able to read and understand a circuit chart
- Minimum 5 years working experience preferably in Can-Making Industry or Electrical/Mechanical field
- Monthly salary will be from USD$600.00 / month upwards plus annual home trip, medical care, accommodation.

Qualified parties may apply at:
7570-C Cruz Compound, San Isidro, Sucat, Parañaque City
(Please indicate area code 02 for #)
Tel. No. (02) 826-5485 / (02) 541-6933 Tina Martinsen
(interviews on June 5-8, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE RECLAMATION AUTHORITY
(Public Estates Authority)
7/F Legaspi Towers 200 Bldg., 107 Paseo de Roxas St., Legaspi Village, 1226 City of Makati
Tel. Nos. (02) 817-4711 to 13; (02) 813-1441 to 45; Facsimile No. (02)815-2662
Website: www.pea.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SUPPLY FOR MANPOWER SERVICES (07-013)

1. The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), through its corporate budget intends to apply the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in the sum of **Four Million Nine Hundred Twenty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Fifty Five Pesos and 40/100 (Php 4,927,355.40)**, inclusive of VAT, under the contract for the Supply for Manpower Services. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PRA now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Supply for Manpower Services for twelve (12) months. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II and Annex A of Section III of the Bidding Documents.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act." Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB).
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents starting **June 6, 2007** from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased from **June 6 to 14, 2007** by interested Bidders from the BAC Secretariat and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of **Four Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Seven Pesos (Php 4,927.00)**. The method of payment will be cash or check payable to PRA. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PRA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **June 13, 2007** at 10:00 A.M. at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the PRA Office on or before **June 26, 2007** at 1:15 P.M. (PRA 7th floor wall clock time). All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the BDS. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **June 26, 2007** at 1:30 P.M. at the PRA Conference Room, 8th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. Prospective Bidders should have undertaken a similar undertaking in the last three (3) years, and should have key personnel and services / equipment available for the manpower services contemplated herein
10. Pursuant to BIR Revenue Regulations 03-2005, all prospective bidders are mandated to file their income and business tax returns electronically using the Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS).
11. The PRA assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.
12. The PRA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Original Signed
DOMINGO T. LIGOT
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 29 & June 4, 2007)

Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc.
HARVARD ROAD, FORBES PARK
MAKATI CITY

June 4, 2007

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

TO ALL MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

The Bidding Committee of Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc., hereby announces the auction sale of the following described property:

(a) one (1) individual proprietary membership certificate.
(b) one (1) corporate proprietary membership certificate.

Any interested party may submit his written bid beginning today until 4:00 p.m., June 12, 2007 to the Office of the Club's General Manager.

The bid shall be subject to the following conditions:

(c) Minimum bid of P20,100,000.00 for individual proprietary membership certificate
(d) Minimum bid of P21,100,000.00 for corporate proprietary membership certificate
(e) Bids shall be accompanied by manager's check equivalent to 20% of the bid price payable to the Manila Golf and Country Club, Inc. and the balance within three (3) days from notice of bid acceptance.
(f) Exemption from the transfer fee of P300,000.00
(g) Certificate will be issued immediately upon receipt of full payment and documentary stamp taxes

(Sgd.) **CESAR CRUZ**
Chairman, Bidding Committee

(PDI--June 4, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Makati City

JAGUAR C. CABUCO,
Petitioner,
-vesus-
SSC Case No. 12-15808-04
EDGAR CABUCO, ELSA CABUCO and the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, through its Manager, JOSE S CATOTO, JR.,
Respondents.
x----------x

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

TO: EDGAR CABUCO and ELSA CABUCO

GREETINGS:

Notice is hereby given that on the 14th day of March, 2007, a **RESOLUTION**, consisting of two pages, was promulgated in the above-mentioned case, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

"**IN VIEW OF ALL THE FOREGOING**, the present petition is hereby **DISMISSED**.

The SSS, however, is ordered to immediately publish a notice to designated beneficiaries Edgar and Elsa Cabuco to file their respective claims for the death benefit of Florencio Cabuco (a.k.a Florencio Caboco) and until such claims are actually filed, the System is ordered to hold the benefit in trust for the aforesaid beneficiaries or their legal heirs.

SO ORDERED".

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - June 4, 2007)

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING
2 – FEMALE BOOKKEEPERS
Accounting Graduate, age : 20-30
Bring resumé w/ picture and transcript
G. Masangkay Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel. No. 252-0096; 233-79-10

FOR SALE (Direct Buyers Only)
PRIME Beach Resort Property located in Panglao Island, BOHOL

- 60,000+ sq. meters combined lot area
- Pictures available via website http://panglao.cebuexplorer.com

For inquiries and to arrange for guided ocular survey, contact: Mobile/SMS +63 (918) 935-4184 - (24H/7D)
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OBITUARIES

NORBERTA COMSTI CAPINPIN

"Ettie"

peacefully joined our Creator on 03rd June at the age of 79.

Her children, ROSANNA and NOEL, RAPHAEL and JANE; grandchildren VIKTOR, ANDRE, CHRISTIAN and LORENZO request friends, relatives and the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington East, The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave., cor Mercedes Ave., San Miguel, Pasig City.

Interment will be on the 6th of June 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:30 A.M. Holy Mass at Arlington East.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Kalaw: 528-0213; 527-3342
Megamall: 635-0219; 635-0220

"Even when I walk through a dark valley, I feel no harm. For you are at my side, your rod and staff give me courage..." Psalm 23:4

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 1, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.1	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc	12	12	11.75	12	145,000
71	30.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	67.5	68	66.5	66.5	1,607,300
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	69	71	69	69	6,235,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	910	910	910	910	2,490
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.55	6,460,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	66	67	66	67	3,098,100
56.5	30.5	Philippine National Bank	54	54	52.5	53	105,700
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	63	63	1,500
39.57	13.91	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	31	32	31	31.5	1,168,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	83	83.5	83	83	58,500
66	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	64	64	63	63	626,100
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
3.81	1.72	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	2,000
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	7.1	7.5	7.1	7.5	1,142,000
6.5	3.5	Filipino Fund Inc.	6.3	6.3	6.3	6.3	19,000
1,900.00	1,500.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,690.00	1,690.00	1,690.00	1,690.00	200
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.4	4.45	4.4	4.4	15,643,000
2.7	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.48	2.7	2.48	2.7	709,000
1,005.00	210	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	615	620	595	620	8,420
2,250.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,100.00	2,120.00	2,100.00	2,100.00	650
1.94	1.08	Vantage Corp	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.7	1,634,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
64.5	41	First Gen Corp.	61	64.5	61	64.5	3,361,300
83	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	80	83	80	82	2,005,000
12.75	6.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	5,722,900
100	13.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	95	100	95	99.5	958,400
100	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	96	100	96	100	4,585,600
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.2	23,169,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.3	6,519,000
2.3	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.14	2.3	2.14	2.3	87,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.48	1.54	1.48	1.52	3,816,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5.9	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	12,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc	2.24	2.24	2.16	2.2	888,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	13,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	56	56	55.5	55.5	245,500
1.62	0.77	RFM Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.44	358,000
80	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	66	67.5	66	66.5	108,200
88	68.5	San Miguel Corp. "B"	76.5	77.5	76.5	77	232,800
0.51	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	250,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	16.25	15.75	16	3,879,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.8	1.07	EEI Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.5	5.8	4,483,000
4.5	1.06	Fortune Cement Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	18,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.4	8.6	8.4	8.6	1,185,000
7	1.2	Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.6	5.3	5.6	312,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.98	1.86	1.86	19,176,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	2,208,000
0.82	0.5	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	20,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.85	170,000
0.095	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.0925	0.0925	0.0875	0.0875	107,100,000
1.14	0.17	APC Group Inc.	1.04	1.08	1	1	46,508,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	328,800,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	21,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	9.1	9.1	9	9	2,982,000
0.017	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	39,300,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.4	6,442,000
2.34	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.28	2.34	2.28	2.32	4,230,000
3.75	0.8	Aries Prime Resources Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.75	34,000
10	4.5	Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc. "A"	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	1,000
566.67	272.92	Ayala Corp.	535	550	535	540	313,730
12.17	6.88	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	12	12	12	12	4,800
6.9	0.7	Batabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	85,000
4.95	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.8	4.9	35,270,000
9.4	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.1	9.2	2,886,000
6.7	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.2	6.7	6.2	6.5	7,129,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	100,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	460,000
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. "B"	2.5	2.55	2.5	2.55	100,000
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.43	0.38	0.39	5,990,000
0.88	0.1	Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.6	0.6	710,000
18.75	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	17.5	18.75	17.25	18.25	5,199,700
4.9	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.7	4.9	4.65	4.7	11,316,000
1.26	0.8	Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	100,000
0.63	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.62	0.62	0.59	0.59	1,970,000
445	205	SM Investments Corp.	407.5	440	407.5	430	710,510
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.62	600,000
0.73	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.67	0.68	43,400,000
0.85	0.51	Solid Group Inc.	0.67	0.71	0.67	0.67	1,200,000
1.56	0.68	South China Resources Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.42	685,000
1.7	0.78	Vivant Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	8,000
0.3	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.215	0.3	0.215	0.28	79,410,000
		PROPERTY					
[illegible]	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.86	1.86	[illegible]
0.58	0.3	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.47	0.5	0.47	0.49	250,000
17	8.54	Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	17	15.5	16.75	23,739,900
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.62	1.64	13,997,000
4.5	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	3.95	4.1	3.95	4.1	3,258,000
4.7	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.35	4.3	4.35	235,000
4.5	1.42	City and Land Developers Inc.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	50,000
0.66	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.64	0.66	0.62	0.65	19,220,000
0.6	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.56	0.57	3,670,000
3.1	0.72	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	710,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.8	0.83	0.8	0.81	38,720,000
0.3	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.27	0.29	47,590,000
1.12	0.36	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.96	0.97	0.94	0.97	10,480,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.94	2	1.94	1.96	67,465,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	353,000,000
0.016	0.005	Interport Resources Corp. "B"	0.013	0.014	0.012	0.014	144,100,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.4	0.42	6,090,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.76	0.83	0.76	0.77	14,930,000
4.25	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	4	4.1	3.95	3.95	43,991,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	98,000
0.34	0.1	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.235	0.34	0.23	0.34	42,150,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.62	0.7	0.62	0.69	105,960,000
4.1	1.1	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	199,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	20	20.75	20	20.75	8,399,800
5.2	1.23	SM Development Corp.	4.8	5.1	4.8	5.1	5,247,000
13.25	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	13.25	12.5	13	13,765,500
0.96	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	240,000
0.34	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.33	37,870,000
1.74	0.3	Zipporah Realty Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.28	1.3	1,178,000
		MEDIA					
34	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32	34	32	33.5	215,300
1.14	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.12	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.56	1.6	1.56	1.58	2,450,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,360.00	1,405.00	1,360.00	1,400.00	172,720
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,570.00	2,585.00	2,565.00	2,575.00	185,540
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7.2	7	7.2	7,083,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.28	0.28	23,550,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.6	8.9	8.6	8.9	48,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	895,000
0.0875	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0675	0.0675	193,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.03	0.031	0.029	0.029	22,300,000
0.075	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.07	116,300,000
1.84	1.12	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.5	1.52	1.5	1.52	532,000
0.06	0.027	Philweb Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0525	0.0525	1,007,200,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.14	161,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	5.9	6.1	5.8	5.8	1,863,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28	28	27	27	2,063,000
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	1,711,000
5	2.7	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	90,000
4.55	2.8	Philippine Racing Club Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	2,078,000
0.91	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.83	0.91	0.81	0.86	35,220,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines, Inc.	0.95	1.06	0.95	1.04	13,030,000
		EDUCATION					
9.8	7.2	Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	2,000
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.4	133,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	25	25	25	25	2,900
5.2	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	5.1	5.2	5	5.1	2,383,000
17.25	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.75	1,142,200
30	9.5	Pryce Inc.	26.5	27	26.5	26.5	336,800
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	425,400,000
7.6	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.7	551,000
7.7	3	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.8	277,000
21.25	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	3,072,800
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.25	105,800
4	1.7	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	1,000
2.6	0.0602	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.44	2.6	2.42	2.55	91,042,000
0.35	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	3,240,000
0.42	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	6,070,000
0.038	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	209,800,000
0.041	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	41,300,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.019	173,200,000
6.4	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	6.2	6.4	6	6.2	13,485,000
30	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	27	26.5	27	613,200
1.2	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	3,630,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.48	3,358,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.43	7,150,000
0.021	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	25,700,000
0.022	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	182,600,000
14.62	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	45,100
0.024	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,115,600,000

CURRENCIES

June 1, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.743108	1.000000	46.1780
Japan	Yen	0.006107	0.008218	0.3795
United Kingdom	Pound	1.471576	1.980300	91.4463
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095158	0.128054	5.9133
Switzerland	Franc	0.606817	0.816593	37.7086
Canada	Dollar	0.695403	0.935804	43.2136
Singapore	Dollar	0.486200	0.654279	30.2133
Australia	Dollar	0.614901	0.827472	38.2110
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.971265	2.652731	122.4978
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198151	0.266652	12.3135
Brunei	Dollar	0.484615	0.652146	30.1148
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000113	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.022656	0.030488	1.4079
UAE	Dirham	0.202388	0.272353	12.5767
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.345700	62.1417
Korea	Won	0.000801	0.001078	0.0498
China	Yuan**	0.097181	0.130777	6.0390
Argentina	Peso	0.241347	0.324781	14.9977
Brazil	Real	0.385389	0.518618	23.9487
Denmark	Kroner	0.134278	0.180698	8.3443
India	Rupee	0.018412	0.024777	1.1442
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218754	0.294377	13.5937
Mexico	New Peso	0.069223	0.093153	4.3016
New Zealand	Dollar	0.546926	0.735998	33.9869
Norway	Kroner	0.123259	0.165870	7.6595
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012240	0.016472	0.7606
South Africa	Rand	0.104291	0.140345	6.4809
Sweden	Kroner	0.107473	0.144626	6.6785
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022498	0.030276	1.3981

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 31, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of May 31, 200

When the US sneezes...

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT WHEN THE US economy sneezes, Asia—and much of the world, for that matter—catches a cold. And the reason for this is that as the biggest economy in the world, the United States tends to be at or near the top of many countries' list of biggest trading and investment partners.

Biggest buyer

For the Asean-5 (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand), the United States remains among the two biggest buyers of their exports. It may surprise some people to know that within our neighborhood, it is not the Philippines but Malaysia that now has the greatest export dependence on the United States, which buys one-fifth (19.5 percent) of that country's merchandise exports.

For the Philippines, China recently dislodged the United States as our biggest export buyer, accounting for one-fifth (19.5 percent) of our own exports, against the United State's 16 percent—suggesting that these days, it is China's sneeze that we need to be more wary of.

We have come a long way in reducing our trade dependence on the United States since the 1990s, and this is good. In 1990, the United States took 38 percent of our merchandise exports, with Japan a far second at 19.8 percent. China was a non-entity in our foreign trade then, taking less than one percent of our exports at the time.

Regional outlook

There is an important significance to all this for the outlook on the Asian economies, and is a prominent theme in the recently-published 2007 Regional Economic Outlook (REO) for Asia-Pacific by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Consistent with its forecast for the rest of the world, the IMF expects Asia's economic growth to moderate somewhat this year and the next.

The report carries both good news and bad news for the Philippines. The bad news is that we have grown more slowly than most of our neighbors, and will continue to lag behind in the year ahead, the recent 6.9 percent first quarter GDP growth notwithstanding. Asian economies grew by an average of 7.6 percent last year, when we managed only 5.4 percent. The good news is that the IMF has raised our 2007 GDP growth forecast to 5.8 percent, from the 5.4 percent they projected last September. With the recent unexpected news on our first quarter growth, IMF may yet further raise this forecast.

US sneeze

The IMF scenario of moderating growth for Asian economies was also conditioned by the current slowdown in the US economy. America has been sneezing a lot lately, with its housing sector reflecting the virus most prominently. This translates to slower consumer spending, which in turn slows down performance in much of the rest of the US economy.

The recent US government report on first-quarter economic performance confirms all this. The nation's GDP grew at a mere 0.6 percent on an annual basis, the slowest quarterly growth in more than four years, and less than half the 1.3 percent anticipated earlier by the US Commerce Department. US exports actually fell by 0.6 percent, widening its trade deficit even further. It is the ballooning US deficits—both in government finances and external payments—that have undermined confidence in the United States dollar, in turn leading to the appreciation of Asian currencies, including ours.

No more contagion

In a recent forum that launched the IMF's REO in Manila, panelists downplayed the effects of the US economic slowdown on Asian economies' outlook, including that for the Philippines.

One, the United States has become less important as a destination for Asia's exports over the years. While it accounted for 26 percent of Asia's exports in 1990, this share is now down to 18 percent. As with the Philippines, much of this export trade has moved over to China. In 1990, China took up a mere 3.9 percent of Asia's exports; this had more than tripled to almost 13 percent as of last year.

Two, the US slowdown will be offset by the continuing rapid growth of China—and also of India—which has had a positive effect on most of the Asian economies. The Philippines, for one, has been a clear beneficiary of China's rapid growth, having enjoyed trade surpluses with that country in recent years.

China slowdown?

The more interesting question to ask, then, is whether China itself will slow down. It is quite likely it could catch a slight cold from the US sneeze, as the United States is actually China's biggest export buyer, accounting for 21.4 percent of its exports. Besides, China has been deliberately trying to slow its growth down to single-digit levels for the last few years—unsuccessfully so far. With the US slowdown's help, will they finally succeed this year?

Well, if they do, it's clearly too early to be rejoicing over our unexpected (and probably unsustainable) first-quarter 6.9 percent growth.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu.

Tanduay putting up 4th plant

₱600M earmarked for rum facility in Misamis Oriental

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

TANDUAY DISTILLERS INC., A 100-percent owned unit of listed firm Tanduay Holdings Inc., is spending P600 million for a new rum manufacturing plant in El Salvador, Misamis Oriental.

Tanduay president Wilson Young said the new facility was scheduled to start commercial operations in July.

The Misamis Oriental facility, which will be Tanduay's fourth plant, will produce 50,000 cases of rum a day.

Tanduay has three other liquor plants in Quiapo, Manila; Cabuyao, Laguna and Negros Occidental. Each plant has a capacity to produce about 40,000 cases of liquor—rum and gin—a day.

"Our sales of rum in 2006 were lower by 6 percent from that in 2005. More consumers in Luzon, especially the younger segment, favored brandy over traditional drinks like rum and gin," Tanduay Holdings chair Lucio Tan told shareholders recently.

Tan said this was very different from the trend abroad where rum was becoming increasingly popular.

TANDUAY/B11

For stock market, correction seen in week ahead

THE STOCK MARKET IS EXPECTED TO LET out some steam after getting fully charged up last week, brokers said.

The Philippine main composite index rallied by 105.59 points or 3.06 percent last week to close at 3,547.35, an all-time high.

"The market had a wild roller coaster ride, tumbling to a low of 3,394.61 and a high of 3,557.48, a 162-point swing," AB Capital Securities said in a market note.

For this week, it said, a technical correction was likely.

"In addition to the risks presented by a possible Chinese sell off again, some technical indicators suggest that the market is overbought. We remain bullish on the long-term outlook, but investors should expect a near-term consolidation," AB Capital said.

The stock market cheered the 6.9-percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter. It was the highest rate recorded in 17 years and way above the forecast of 5.7 to 5.8 percent.

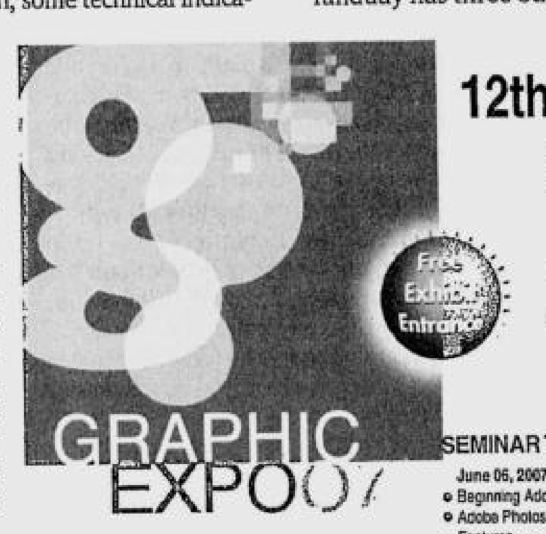
In the same market note, AB Capital said the strong performance in the first quarter made the government optimistic that the 6.1-percent GDP growth target for the whole year would be achieved.

Most analysts and economists, however, are expected to raise their respective GDP growth estimates, which are mostly below 6 percent, the investment house said.

"It appears the whole market is being reevaluated based on strong first quarter figures," said Francisco Liboro, PCCI Securities president.

INQUIRER news wires reported last week that Moody's Investors Service reaffirmed its stable outlook on Philippine sovereign debt, but said government revenues could not yet fund major infrastructure needs.

STOCK/B9



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SEMINAR TOPICS & SCHEDULE

June 06, 2007, Wednesday
- Beginning Adobe Photoshop CS3
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: The New Features
- The ABCs of Color Management
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Color Management and Printing
- Adobe Illustrator CS2 Tips and Tricks Enhancing Your Workflow in Creative Suite 2 using Adobe Bridge
- Adobe InDesign CS2 Styles Made Easy
- Principles of Effective Publications Design

June 07, 2007, Thursday
- Advanced Photoshop CS3 for Power Users
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Mastering Channels
- Using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator Together
- Creating Eye-Popping Graphics with Adobe Illustrator CS2
- Macromedia Flash 8 Cartooning
- Energizing Macromedia Flash 8 Projects (with Action Script)
- Character Design in Autodesk 3DS Max
- Integrating Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Autodesk Maya 8

June 08, 2007, Friday
- Adobe Photoshop CS3: Advance Image Compositing
- Digital Painting with Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Painter IX.5
- Photographing People: Secrets of Professional Photographer Revealed
- Glamour Nude & Bodyscapes Photography
- Macromedia Dreamweaver 8 Power User Tips and Tricks
- Beyond Power Point: Macromedia Flash 8 for Corporate Presentations
- Turn Your Final Cut Pro Project Into a DVD
- DVD Authoring Basics with Encore DVD 2.0

June 09, 2007, Saturday
- Adobe Photoshop CS3 for Portrait Photographers
- Digital Darkroom using Adobe Photoshop CS3
- Final Cut Pro from Raw Footage to DVD
- Visual Magic with Adobe After Effects 7.0
- Basic Video Editing with Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0
- Adobe Premiere Pro 2.0: Tips and Tricks
- Making Powerful Corporate Presentation Materials and Web Projects

ANNUAL DIGITAL ART COMPETITIONS

All digital designers are invited to join the Annual Digital Art Competitions in various categories: Digital Fine Art, Digital Graphic Design, Web Design, and Animation Competition sponsored by technology vendors and media organizations. The competition is open to all amateur and professional graphic designers, digital artists, web masters, photographers, and animators. Entries will be exhibited in the Graphic Expo Design Gallery.

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Court OKs pre-need firm rehab plan

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE MAKATI REGIONAL TRIAL Court has approved the rehabilitation plan of The Professional Group, giving the beleaguered pre-need firm the chance to get back on its feet.

In a decision dated May 28, Makati Judge Cesar O. Untalan approved the recommendation of TPG receiver Arthur R. Ponsaran to push through with the rehabilitation program.

A company statement quoted Untalan as saying in the said decision that the court was giving TPG a chance to undertake a rehabilitation program to protect the interest of its plan holders.

"The (company's) modified rehabilitation plan ... presented a feasible and attainable course of action to rehabilitate petitioner," Untalan said.

The approved rehabilitation plan focuses on the following three key elements:

- The need to fix the plan benefits of open-ended plans to mitigate the effects of uncontrolled tuition increases;
- The need to reschedule the plan maturity to provide breathing space while the trust fund assets were growing; and
- The need to invest the trust fund assets in higher yielding instruments to ensure the payment of benefits to plan holders whose plans have matured, while simultaneously preserving the trust fund to cover plans that have yet to mature.

This means that in terms of amounts of benefits, only the open-ended or traditional plans will be modified based on contributions paid.

Fixed value plans for academic and pension plans will be paid according to the original maturity value of their contracts.

For academic plans and pension plans that matured in 2005-2006, the court gave TPG six months from the date of court approval to resume benefit payments, which should be made in accordance with the specifications of the approved modified rehabilitation plan.

TPG said in a statement that its rehabilitation plan gave all plan holders equal rights.

"From the beginning, the formulation of TPG's rehabilitation plan has been guided by the principle of equity. Any solution to be considered in the plan must benefit all plan holders and cannot favor any particular group," TPG president Yolanda D. Miranda said in a statement.

With the plan now approved, TPG intends to focus on two areas: Servicing of the restructured plans and the investment and growth of its trust funds.

TPG was the fourth pre-need firm to file for rehabilitation due to financial woes. The others were Pacific Plans Inc., Platinum Plans and College Assurance Plan.

HSBC IN GLOBAL CITY
HSBC Philippines CEO Mark Watkinson, HSBC Asia Pacific CEO Mike Smith and BSP Monetary Board member Alfredo Antonio led the formal inauguration of HSBC Centre at the Bonifacio Global City. Covering nearly 12,000 square meters, the facility will house more than a thousand employees performing various support functions for the bank's 24 branches nationwide.

Moody's raises PLDT debt rating

By Daxim L. Lucas

AN INTERNATIONAL DEBT WATCHER HAS raised the credit rating of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) after the country's largest telecom firm reported a strong performance in the first quarter of the year.

In a statement, Moody's Investors Service said it had raised PLDT's local currency corporate family rating to Baa2 from Baa3.

Moody's also affirmed PLDT's Ba2 foreign currency bond rating, while maintaining its ratings outlook at "stable."

Moody's said PLDT's present rating reflects the company's position as the largest telecommunications operator in the Philippines; strong consolidated financial metrics; dominant market position, founded on its integrated business platform; and its moderate sensitivity to technological developments and competitive pressures.

"However, these factors are counterbalanced by country-specific issues, such as uncertainty surrounding the Philippines' political and economic environment," the ratings firm warned.

"Any deterioration in the political system or changes in the regulatory regime could impact PLDT's operating profile and prospects for growth," it said.

The upgrade reflects "continued improvements in PLDT's financial profile and the consolidation of its strong operating performance," Moody's vice president Laura Acres said.

"In subscriber terms, the company holds 58 percent of the Philippines' wireless market and 63 percent of the fixed-line business, and both positions contribute to its healthy free cash flow generation capabilities," she added.

The stable outlook reflects Moody's expectation that PLDT will execute its business plan as outlined.

Moody's also stressed that the company's foreign currency bond rating could not be raised further without an improvement in the Philippines foreign currency country ceiling.

PLDT's financial metrics exhibit strong investment grade characteristics; hence any upward pressure on the local currency rating would be more reflective of a stabilizing economic, political and social environment reducing the operating environment uncertainties, the company said.

Specifically, Moody's would look for PLDT to maintain its existing sound financial profile," it added. "On the other hand, downward pressure is not expected, given that PLDT currently enjoys a healthy financial and operating risk profile."

Moody's added that "event risk is always a possibility because of the parlous state of the socioeconomic and political environment."

HSBC keen on going into insurance business in RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

BRITISH BANKING GIANT HSBC IS DRAWING UP A fresh strategy to establish a foothold in the Philippine insurance business.

The bank also reaffirmed its vote of confidence in the country with the opening last week of the HSBC Centre, an 11,900-sq. m. backroom hub at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

In an interview, visiting HSBC Asia-Pacific chief executive officer Michael Smith said he had seen a lot of progress in the Philippines since his last visit here two-and-a-half years ago.

"I'm very positive about the Philippines," he said.

Smith said insurance was among the new areas that HSBC wanted to explore in the country, in line with expectations that the wealth management business would boom in Asia-Pacific.

"We need more insurance products, better delivery and better strategy because of the insurance business' potentials," he said.

HSBC Philippines CEO Mark Watkinson added that the bank was now putting together a strategic plan to enable the bank to grab bigger opportunities in the insurance business.

Asked whether bancassurance, or the selling of insurance products through tie-ups between banks and insurance firms, was part of the plan, Smith said HSBC was looking at all options available.

He said banks and insurance firms were natural partners in the wealth management side of the business.

"As the country's per capita GDP (gross domestic product) rises, the amount of disposable income increases and the ability of individuals to look for ways to manage their surplus assets will become more and more important, as is the protection of those assets," Smith said.

Consumer banking was likewise seen becoming increasingly important in developing markets, like the Philippines.

He said HSBC's robust credit card business in the country was a good example of opportunities in consumer banking.

"The other area which the bank has been focusing on is the SME (small and medium enterprises) sector. SMEs don't just need capital, they also need cash management services, and there's a lot of opportunity here moving forward," he said.

SSS hosts OFW Day and Jobs Fair

IN ITS CONTINUING EFFORT TO BRING its services closer to members, the Social Security System (SSS) will host the first OFW Day and Jobs Fair for all overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their families. This was announced by SSS Vice President for Public Affairs Marissu G. Bugante who added that the event will be held on Friday, June 8, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the SSS Livelihood Trade Center, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City (fronting the Land Transportation Office).

"With the theme 'SSS At OFW: Magkaagapay, Magkaibigan, Magkabalikat Magpakailanman', the event aims to reach out to the OFWs and their families as a fitting tribute to all migrant workers in celebration of the Migrant Workers' Day on June 7," Bugante said.

The whole-day event will feature services such as labor information, free seminars on livelihood, job, investment and business opportunities, free legal assistance and counseling, and free medical mission. Lots of giveaways and promotional items are also in store from sponsors like Globe Telecom, Bayad Center, BancNet, Filinvest Land Inc, Landbank, Philippine Health Insurance Corp, and the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG).

The SSS OFW Day and Jobs Fair is held in cooperation with Department of Labor and Employment, Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Technology Resource Center, Quezon City Public Employment Service Office, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Interior and Local Government, Kaibigan, OFW Family Club, Zonta Club of Quezon City, Center for Overseas Workers, National Greening Movement Foundation, and Women in Development Foundation, Inc. Admission is free.

For further details, call the SSS Corporate Communications Department at 435-9796 or 920-6401 locals 5324 and 5331.

TCM responds to demand for English, voice courses

IN RESPONSE TO THE HIGH DEMAND FOR ITS short courses that improve the communication and selling skills as well the personality of business executives and other professionals, The Corporate Mind strengthens its commitment to its market with the year- round scheduling of Joscephine Gomez's Prescriptions for English Fluency, Voice-as-Asset Seminar Workshop and its other professional development courses. Beginning May 21, Prescriptions for English Fluency, an intensive eight-hour course that focuses on the 45 most difficult usages in English grammar, will be held every 2nd and 4th week of the month, Mondays through Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. and every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Voice-as-Asset, an intensive eight-hour vocal behavior modification program shall be held every first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. beginning June 2 and every first week of the month, Mondays through Thursdays from 6 to 8 p.m. The third week of every month and all other Saturdays and Sundays shall be devoted to any of the other 25 course offerings such as Optimizing Sales Performance, Converting Businesss Proposals to Cash, Personality Development for Increased Productivity, Basic and Advanced Public Speaking. Venue shall be at the Mega Plaza on ADB Avenue corner Garnet Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. For more information, call 687-7898, 0919-8763770 or 0917-6032017.

GENERAL MILLS DONATES TO RED CROSS
General Mills Philippines, a subsidiary of US company General Mills, donated $20,000 (P1 million) to the Philippine National Red Cross for the victims of Typhoon 'Reming' which ravaged the Bicol area. Shown are Philippine National Red Cross Chair and CEO Sen. Richard Gordon, General Mills Philippines managing director Tess Panganiban (left), senior marketing manager Jennifer C. Wong, and finance and supply chain director Ravi Sivaraman (right). In the Philippines, General Mills markets some of the world's best loved brands, including Pillsbury Hotcakes and Crispee coating mix, Haagen-Dazs Super Premium Ice Cream, Betty Crocker baking products, Old El Paso, Pop Secret and Progresso Soups.

HCCA holds seminar for nursing professionals

HEALTH CARE CORP OF AMERICA (HCCA) recently held a seminar for chief nurses and supervisors of five private and government hospitals in Baguio City, as part of the company's corporate social responsibility projects in the Philippines.

The educational seminar-conducted by HCCA International chief nurse and director of international operations Wanona Fritz at Hotel Elizabeth-is part of HCCA's initiative to give back to the local nursing community and assist in the country's efforts to train and cultivate world-class, globally competitive nurses.

According to Joseph Gilinsky, HCCA vice president and managing director for Asia-Pacific and Middle East Regions, "We expect many Filipino nurses to work in hospitals in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, but we also know that many will remain in the Philippines to serve their communities and local hospitals. Regardless of where Filipino nurses will live their professional lives, HCCA will provide supplemental education and training for them."

HCCA is a global organization with operations in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, East Asia, Europe, Central America, and Caribbean locations. HCCA International employs the most competent registered nurses from around the world to work with top medical institutions in the United States. The multinational company has built a solid reputation in global healthcare operations and employment of nursing professionals, having operated more than 40 hospitals on five continents, and matched over 30,000 healthcare professionals with some of the world's most prestigious medical facilities.

HCCA International is a major employer of Filipino nurses. Successful candidates are employed in one of HCCA's 50 client hospitals in the United States. The nurse always has the choice of where s/he works depending on the needs of HCCA's hospitals across the States. The nurses are employed through the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

"Since HCCA employs nurses for our operations in the United States, the company is always looking for opportunities to give back to the community, organizations, hospitals, or schools where the nurses come from," explained Fritz.

"We teach the nurses that HCCA will recruit for client hospitals in the States and we also teach the entire senior class of a school of nursing and other nurses who wish to remain in their respective hospitals. That's what we did in Baguio," Fritz said.

"In some cases, HCCA forges ties with schools of nursing and I go through a curriculum development process with them and then teach the faculty strategies in educating nurses," she added.

A 37-year veteran in the international healthcare industry, Fritz taught as associate professor in the schools of nursing of the University of Maryland and Georgetown University. As chief clinical officer in US hospitals, Fritz managed virtually all clinical areas of the hospital, including the nursing department, the operating room, the emergency room, and the departments of radiology, laboratory, and respiratory.

As HCCA's chief nursing officer, Fritz has created a core competency program that develops essential skills in nurses for HCCA's client hospitals.

Parties interested in the educational and sponsorship programs of HCCA Philippines may call the company at 757-1000. HCCA Philippines is located at 33rd Floor Tower 1 The Enterprise Centre, 6766 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

SCTEX PROJECT INSPECTION
Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) President and CEO Narciso L. Abaya (right) inspects the slightly damaged slope protection of a portion of the Clark North Interchange of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) Package 2 (Clark-Tarlac section) caused by heavy downpour over the weekend. Beside Abaya is BCDA-SCTEx program manager for engineering and construction Eduardo Lena who reported that the damage to the slope protection was minimal. Hazama-Taisei-Nippon Steel (HTN) general manager Makoto Yoshida, the Japanese contractor in charge of building Package 2, assured BCDA that the damage would not affect the timetable for the completion of the Clark-Tarlac section in August.

DOT SUPPORTS AIREEC
Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano (2nd from right) shakes the hand of Expo and Convention Promotions Inc (ECPI) president Leon Katz shortly after signing a memorandum of agreement signifying government support for the 1st Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference (Aireec), which will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center from Dec. 6 to 10. Organized by ECPI, the event will enable the Department of Tourism to promote the Philippines to Aireec's estimated 5,000 prominent visitors from some 50 countries worldwide. Flanking Durano and Katz are Barlin International Group chief executive officer and US National Association of Realtors president liaison to the Philippines Susan Barlin and executive director Daniel G. Corpuz of the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corp, the marketing arm of the DOT.

Neri backs gov't buyout of MRT-3 BLT contract

By Doris C. Dumlao

SOCIOECONOMIC PLANNING Secretary Romulo Neri said it makes economic sense for the government to take over the build-lease-transfer contract governing the Metro Railway Transit 3.

Neri estimated that the proposed buyout would trim the government's financing costs on the utility by at least 400 basis points.

"The logic is that the private sector undertaking the project is borrowing at a very high cost so therefore, when we have to pay them for operating and financial costs, we have to pay more," Neri said in a briefing.

"If government takes over, government can buy the debt at a bigger discount and borrow against it at a lower rate," Neri added.

ROMULO NERI

He estimated that the private firms borrow at a commercial rate of 9-10 percent, compared to government's borrowing cost of 5-6 percent.

The government plans to restructure the payments owed to the Japanese operator of MRT3 Tespi Corp., a subcontractor of Sumitomo Corp.

The restructuring will not just cover the past due accounts estimated at $30-$40 million, but also the payments due for the rest of the contract.

This means that the government will meet its commitments early, instead of paying $2 billion over the life of the contract or until 2025.

An earlier study earlier estimated that the government could save $1 billion from the early buyout of MRT3 or half of the remaining payments due until 2025.

Under the contract, the government has committed a 15- percent return on equity to the private investors in the MRT3 project.

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New investors to boost profit of PNOC unit

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC ALTERNATIVE FUELS Corp. expects to be the biggest cash cow of the Philippine National Oil Co. in four years, due mainly to the more than $2 billion in investments that it has so far secured from investors.

In a briefing, PNOC-AFC chair Renato Velasco said the over $2 billion in committed investments for the next three years was just from two investors: $1.3 billion from British firm NRG Chemical Engineering Pte. Ltd. and $1 billion from Tian Biogreen Energy Ltd.

"Hopefully, in the next four years, we will be the biggest among PNOC's subsidiaries. The $2 billion in investments don't even include our other tie-ups with Sumitomo Corp., Samsung Corp. and Headwaters Inc. We're very optimistic," he said.

When PNOC-AFC used to be PNOC Petrochemical Development Corp., he said the company's industrial park in Bataan was losing around P300 million a year.

Because of an Office of the Government Corporate Counsel (OGCC) opinion issued earlier this year, however, he said the industrial park in Limay and Mariveles should start generating income for PNOC-AFC by next year.

Prior to the OGCC opinion, only petrochemical facilities could be established inside PNOC-AFC's 530-hectare industrial estate.

With the OGCC opinion, however, the petrochemical park could now be used as a site for alternative fuels facilities, such as biodiesel and bio-ethanol refineries.

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Pacific Online's May revenue hit P40M

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PACIFIC ONLINE SYSTEMS Corp. (Pacific Online), the government's lone online lottery system supplier in Visayas and Mindanao, said its revenue in May hit P40 million, its highest for a month.

This after lotto sales in the regions registered by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes (PCSO) Visayas Mindanao hit a record of P394.05 million last May, Pacific Online said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

The figure was 25 percent more than sales recorded in the same month last year.

Sales were mainly driven by the high jackpot of the Superlotto 6/49 pegged at P108 million on May 31, and expected to hit P120 million by June 3.

"We expect sales and revenue growth to continue as PCSO lotto games become increasingly popular nationwide. Pacific Online is rolling out 500 terminals in 2007," Pacific Online chair Willy Ocier said.

Pacific Online earlier reported an 89-percent increase in its net income for the first quarter to P27.2 million from P14.4 million in the same period in 2006.

Pacific Online said gross revenues rose 3 percent to P107.9 million year-on-year, fueled by the rollout of terminals. Pacific Online now has 1,120 terminals from 980 in December 2006.

Total expenses shrunk 15 percent to P71.4 million in the first quarter this year.

The company continues to expect strong revenues from the rollout of additional terminals and the introduction of new games.

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Pru Life UK nears bancassurance deal

By Doris C. Dumlao

INSURER PRU LIFE UK, THE Philippine unit of British financial giant Prudential plc, is set to forge a bancassurance deal in two months.

At a briefing last Friday, PRU life UK president and CEO Nishit Majmudar said the insurer's venture into bancassurance would mean the wider distribution of its products.

Bancassurance is the selling of life insurance products to bank clients.

In the Philippines, however, banks are only allowed to sell the life insurance products of affiliates, which means the lender has to own 5 percent of the insurance company.

The company has been scouting for a bancassurance partner for the last few years.

Majmudar said bancassurance was part of the company's thrust in the Philippines to continue growing its distribution network.

On Friday, the company launched PruLink Protection Plus, a life insurance product with hospitalization and critical illnesses benefits.

"I am confident this product will confirm our position as a leader in product innovation," Majmudar said.

Pru Life currently sells primarily to the upper income market, but has plans to make greater inroads into the CD market.

Stock market seen ...

From page B7

The government's debt-to-GDP ratio of 66 percent in 2006 was higher than its B1-rated peers Indonesia, Pakistan, Mongolia and Ukraine.

Strong economic prospects this year and sustained fiscal reform may convince rating agencies to upgrade the country's debt ratings, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said in a statement.

The government aims to limit its budget gap this year at P63 billion or 0.9 percent of GDP. Last year's gap was 1.04 percent of GDP. *Elizabeth S. Lacson*

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The Internet—What's in it for me?

By Leighton Phillips

THE RAPID EXPANSION of the Internet has produced one billion users worldwide. But the people making up the next billion Internet users will be very different from the first—and they will use it very differently too.

Today, the majority of Internet users speak English, have incomes well above the poverty line, use the Internet frequently for entertainment, and have established views of Intellectual Property (IP) licensing. The Next Billion are likely to be very different on all of these points. Which means the ICT industry, regulators and service providers all need to ask the same question the next billion users will ask: "The Net—what's in it for me?"

Next billion users

Without a clear reason or degree of usefulness, the Internet will be silent for regions whose languages do not make it on the net. These include the 500 million people in Southeast Asia and the 900 million people in Africa, who are likely to make up a large portion of the Next Billion Users. The responsibility is for industry leaders—and governments—to devise responsible strategies to help bridge the digital divide, and embrace these broader challenges.

There are four high-level areas that will affect the Next Billion. First is language. Over 81 percent of existing Internet users interact on the net using only 10 languages. However, none of those ten languages are the local languages of Southeast Asia, South Asia or Africa. So in many respects, to the developing world—the Net, is silent.

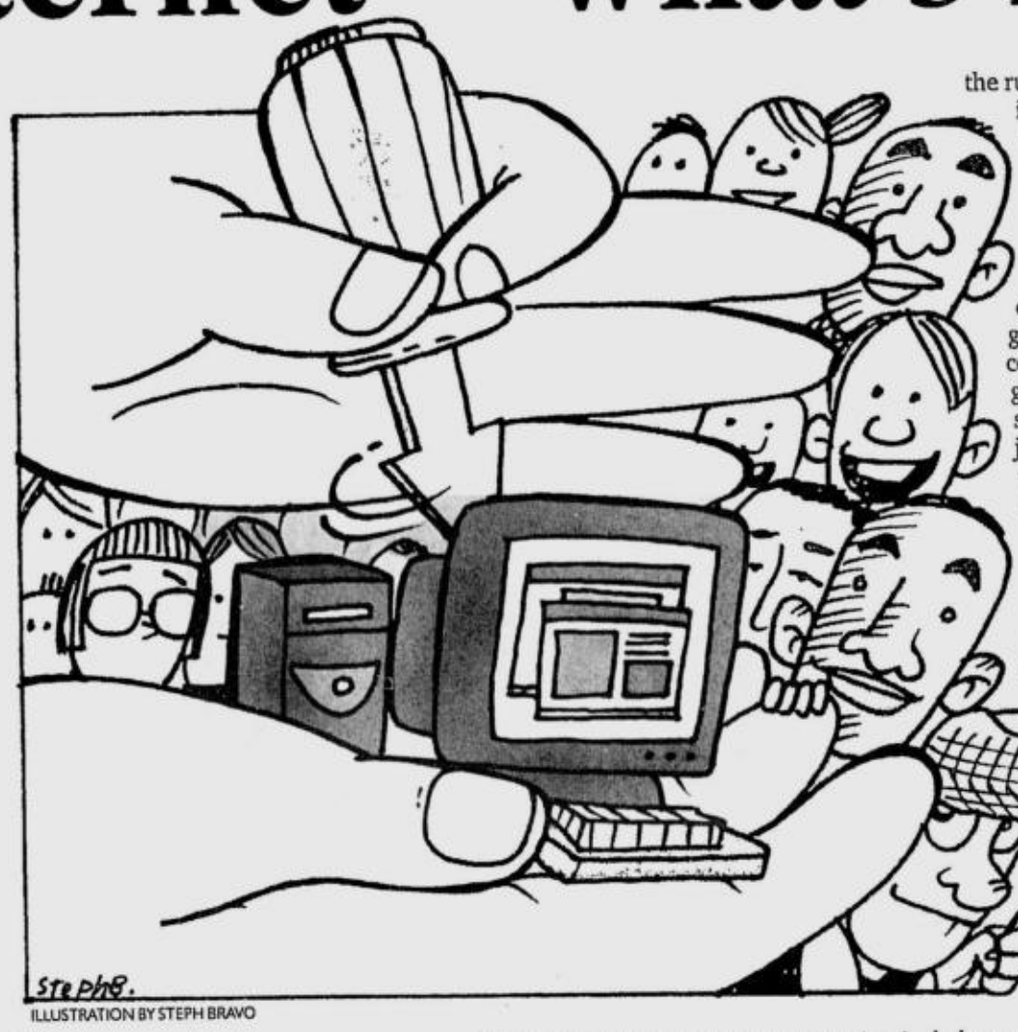


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

The content challenge

Secondly, content and services, or the way people use the net. The majority of users today are in the developed countries, with annual salaries of several tens of thousands of dollars a year. Contrast that to those potential users in the regions we just mentioned. The chances are a sizeable proportion fall into the category described by the World Bank as 'extreme poverty'; i.e. living on less than $2 a day. Which means that the kinds of content that engage people in, for example, New York—online books sales through Amazon, travel sales, etc.—will have no relevance to a farmer living in the provinces of the Philippines.

The third issue is that of the costs of intellectual property rights (IPR) of content, specifically rich-media content. In some areas rich-media content does exist in multiple languages and is relevant to the rural-communities in the emerging markets (India, for example). However, the majority of this content is developed out of the mature markets, with pricing models driven by those markets.

The fourth and final issue is duplicated effort and resources going into the provision of digital content. In some recent Asean governments roundtable workshops, it became obvious that in just one area—agriculture—there was considerable duplication of rich digital content for the same subject matter.

eKnowledge in RP

The good news is that industries, authorities and regulators are waking up to these issues and the emerging opportunities. For example, a special United Nations group met in February 2007 with Silicon Valley leaders to explore how the technology industry, government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can come together to bolster economic development around the world—and specifically called out "rich local content" as one of the more promising areas for investigation.

Two years ago, Intel and the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines and Philippine Commission on Information and Communication Technology made a draft proposal called 'eKnowledge Public Domain' (eKPD). The eKPD model had several key pillars to promote eKnowledge in developing regions.

These centered on the formation of an online public domain or pool, which would hold contributions of social-economic (SMB, agriculture, healthcare, K-12 education), standards-based rich digital content and modules, in an 'IPR free' structure suited for participating countries and jointly paid for by all government stakeholders. Participating countries would be able to withdraw content as required, significantly speeding up the creation of content of significant impact, at much lower cost to governments, and more importantly—at no cost to the end user in a rural community setting.

Unesco-Intel's pilot project

Using initial Unesco and Intel funding, a basic pilot was developed to test some of the ideas in one of the most socio-economic challenged locations of the Philippines. Not only was the content well received and used by the community, interesting phenomena emerged. It became clear that local pride and know-how increased the impetus to publish (product, service, tourism information), and that a viral competitive element crept in, boosting both interest and quality.

All this is a world away from discretionary income, Amazon, and online gambling—but all these initiatives are proving that the Next Billion is keen to use the Internet in many different ways to those predominant right now. The good thing is: they're finding answers to that "What's in it for me?" question. The answer is: plenty.

Leighton Phillips leads Intel's emerging markets program in Asia Pacific. He is based in Singapore and can be contacted at leighton.phillips@intel.com

Smart introduces most affordable 3G handset

SMART COMMUNICATIONS Inc., the country's leading wireless services provider, has brought to the market the cheapest third-generation (3G) handset - the LG KU250 by LG Mobile.

Selected by the GSM Association (GSMA) to lead the worldwide "3G For All" campaign announced during the 2007 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, the LG KU250 is an entry-level 3G phone that can handle basic wireless communication needs as well as multimedia-rich 3G content and services.

The LG KU250 phone kit will sell at only P6,290.

Dressed in an elegant black shell, the sleek device is equipped with a dual camera. It can also be used for high-speed Internet access using Smart's 3G network either on the phone or connecting it to a PC or a laptop. With 10MB internal memory, and expandable memory using a Micro SD card, the device can also be used as an audio and video player that supports the most popular audio and video file formats.

With the LG KU250, subscribers can also access other services, like video calling, full-track music dwnloads, video streaming, video dating.

Jerome Almirante, 3G Business Head, said: "This is a significant 3G milestone for Smart. Offering this product demonstrates our commitment to providing not only affordable 3G services, but also affordable devices to access these services."

With technology, employees no longer chained to their desks

By Abigail L. Ho

GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN AN EMPLOYEE is measured by the number of hours he or she spends behind a desk.

With the advent of technology, companies worldwide have been prompted to capitalize on employee "mobility" as a competitive tool.

According to a cross-industry survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit and Nokia, industries ranging from financial services to pharmaceuticals now see mobility as a key factor to their success.

Survey respondents said business mobility boosted their competitive edge, enabling them to respond more quickly to customers (36 percent), improve collaboration within the enterprise (27 percent), and work with multiple partners and suppliers (12 percent).

"These findings suggest business mobility leads to revenue gains rather than simply reducing operating costs," the report said.

As a result, survey respondents said that in the next two years, many of them planned to adopt mobile applications for core business activities, including greater remote access (41 percent), customer relationship management tools (34 percent), mobile groupware (21 percent) and sales force automation (17 percent).

"Increasingly, activities in the field are regarded as central to the success of the business. No longer is mobility associated simply with capturing information in the field and bringing it back to the office for processing," the report said.

With companies all over the world increasingly embracing mobility, research firm IDC sees converged mobile devices (CMDs) such as smartphones and PDA phones becoming "indispensable tools" for mobile workers.

According to IDC's latest mobile enterprise device usage forecast, global shipments of mobile devices geared toward the corporate market would expand at a compounded annual growth rate of 54 percent to reach more than 82 million units by 2011.

While the US and Western Europe would be the key markets for CMDs over the forecast period, IDC said the majority of Asia Pacific and other regions in the world would also experience a shift towards greater enterprise adoption.

"One of the key drivers for the expected growth in enterprise adoption of CMDs lies in the power to use these devices, beyond basic telephony, to access corporate email, the Internet/Intranet, and securely link to corporate databases," IDC mobile enterprise devices program research analyst Sean Ryan said.

IBM gives 'green' technology a $1-B push

By Riza T. Olchondra

IBM IS REDIRECTING $1 BILLION OF ITS yearly resources to roll out new products and services that would give IBM and its clients 42-percent savings on energy consumption in their data centers, transforming the world's business and public technology infrastructures into "green" facilities.

Called "Project Big Green," IBM's initiative targets corporate data centers where energy constraints and costs can limit their ability to grow. The initiative includes a new global "green team" of more than 850 energy efficiency architects from across IBM.

The tech giant said that under the program, an average of 25,000-square foot data center should be able to achieve 42 percent energy savings.

Based on the energy mix in the US, this savings equate to 7,439 tons of carbon emissions saved per year.

According to analyst firm IDC, roughly $0.50 is spent on energy for every dollar of computer hardware. This is expected to increase by 54 percent to $0.71 over the next four years.

"The data center energy crisis is inhibiting our clients' business growth as they seek to access computing power," IBM Global Technology Services senior vice president Mike Daniels said.

"Many data centers have now reached full capacity, limiting a firm's ability to grow and make necessary capital investments. Today we are providing clients the IBM action plan to make their data centers fully utilized and energy efficient."

IBM currently runs the world's largest commercial technology infrastructure, with more than eight million square feet of data centers in six continents. By using the energy efficiency initiatives it is offering clients, IBM said it expects to double the computing capacity of its data centers within the next three years without increasing power consumption or its carbon footprint.

Compared to doubling the size of its data centers by building out new space, IBM expects this will help save more than five billion kilowatt hours of energy per year.

"Just as IBM helped organizations grapple with new innovations around the Internet and Linux, we will again assist clients navigate this new era of energy efficient computing," IBM Systems and Technology Group senior vice-president Bill Zeitler said.

"Relief from the energy crisis can't be achieved through incremental improvements. Bold ideas and actionable plans are needed to deal with this issue."

IT key to rapid growth in financial services sector, says Headstrong

By Riza T. Olchondra

TECHNOLOGY STRATEGIES ARE NOT only enabling financial services companies to resolve significant cost issues, they are also key factors that contribute to rapid growth, said an expert from Headstrong, a global consultancy firm with about 500 employees in the Philippines.

Senior managing consultant Miguel Estevez, a specialist in business process reengineering and system solutions for financial institutions, said companies in the financial services industry were investing in information technology solutions to comply with regulatory requirements, and to ensure cost-efficient operations.

But they are now also looking at IT to accelerate growth and generate additional revenues," said Estevez, who is among Headstrong's 125 financial services domain experts.

He cited a survey of 288 executives from 58 countries conducted in 2006 by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

The survey showed that 83 percent of chief executive officers and board members consider IT as a key factor in driving revenue growth in the next three years.

Headstrong has domain expertise in capital markets and enterprise IT/business strategy alignment and execution. It currently services eight of the world's top 10 investment banks, providing solutions in wealth and asset management, prime brokerage and securities financing, equities and fixed income.

"Headstrong assists global financial institutions in refining their business requirements and articulating a technology strategy to streamline processes, manage operations and comply with regulatory frameworks," he said. "We combine technology, business process and global delivery innovation to boost overall industry performance."

Headstrong recently signed a partnership agreement with with Aleri Inc., a developer of high-performance event stream processing software, to co-develop MiFID-compliant solutions for the European capital markets. The Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID), set to take effect in November 2007, seeks to foster more unified European markets with greater convergence in business practice, market structure, and regulation in member states.

Headstrong's other development centers are located in the United States, United Kingdom and India. Over 60 percent of the firm's 2006 revenues of $155 million came from the securities industry.

Marina to keep watch on ships

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE MARITIME INDUSTRY AUthority (Marina) said the fire that torched documents at its headquarters last week would not hamper its ability to ensure that all vessels under its responsibility are seaworthy.

Marina head executive assistant Antero Penasales said in an interview that the agency had already ordered enforcement offices nationwide to double-check ships' documentary requirements to ensure that only eligible vessels will be allowed to sail.

"We have to make sure that no one will take advantage of the situation. We will impose the full penal provision of existing laws if found out that [people] are exploiting the situation," Penasales said.

The agency is reconstructing documents lost in the fire.

It did not set a deadline for completing its work, but said it would not affect the operations of commercial vessels.

The reconstruction process only covers certificates of public convenience (CPC) issued to shipping lines as well as safety certificates, special permits and financial statements. Marina ruled out foul play saying that it was not hearing any high-profile case.

Wind energy project gets perks

₱1.87-B hybrid generator to rise in Mindoro

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS HAS APproved the granting of perks to a $40.7-million (P1.87 billion) investment on a 25-megawatt hybrid power generator that would run on either wind energy or diesel.

BOI data showed that Philippine Hybrid Energy Systems Inc. (Phesi), a unit of American firm BreezElectric LLC, plans to put up a power facility on Mt. Paitan in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro—one of the poorest provinces in the country.

BreezElectric, which has "extensive experience" in the development of financing and operation of energy projects, put up Phesi to build, own and operate ecologically friendly wind power systems that provide reliable electricity supply to small electric grids throughout the Philippines at costs lower than competing technologies.

Phesi's planned facility in Mindoro would sell its output to the two power distributors on the island, Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (Ormeco) and Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative (Omeco).

Ormeco caters to 99,000 customers in 421 barangays while Omeco has 46,000 clients in 135 barangays.

The cooperatives currently get the bulk of their electricity requirement from state-owned National Power Corp.'s Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG), which is augmented with deliveries from independent power producers.

Under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Napocor will privatize its operations in areas covered by SPUG, which are off-grid or not connected to the major power grids.

Phesi's project is expected to supply 23 percent of Mindoro's yearly demand starting 2009.

Also, Phesi intends to sell carbon credits as certification of greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, since the project is meant to displace electricity generated by diesel generators that burn diesel and bunker fuel.

The trading of the so-named carbon credits is part of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) provided for under the Kyoto Protocol, an agreement that legally binds at least 30 industrialized countries to meet targets for the reduction of GHG emissions.

The CDM allows industrialized countries to meet their GHG reduction targets by investing in emission reduction "credits" from projects based in developing countries.

Further, the renewable energy sector is one of the preferred areas of investments under the current Investment Priorities Plan, which gives such projects pioneer status.

This qualifies proponents to tax holidays of up to six years, duty-free importation of capital equipment and other perks.

BFAR to set up 4 new mariculture parks in La Union, Pangasinan

By Amy R. Remo

THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES AND Aquatic Resources is putting up four mariculture parks in La Union and Pangasinan in an effort to spread out production to more areas.

On the sidelines of the North Food Caravan Harvest launch last week, BFAR Region 1 Director Nestor Denus Domenden said two of the mariculture parks would be dedicated to fish, and the other two to seaweeds.

"Except for Pangasinan and its *bangus* production, Region 1 is mostly a vegetable producing region, and this move to put up mariculture parks for fish and seaweed would enable us to create more production areas to further increase the country's fisheries supply," said Domenden.

Domenden said the two mariculture parks for fish would be put up as soon as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources issues the needed environmental compliance certificates.

These would be set up in Rosario, La Union and Sual, Pangasinan.

The other two parks, according to Domenden, would be in Dasol and Infanta, both in Pangasinan.

One would be put up this year and the other by the first quarter next year.

"These parks would serve as a sea garden for the region but production would be mostly seaweeds," he said.

According to Domenden, there are about 100 small producers of seaweeds in the region, whom BFAR is enticing to transfer to the mariculture park.

Region 1 has one mariculture park in Sto. Tomas, La Union, which used to have 36 locators. It now has only 11 locators.

The drop in the number of locators may be due to the emergence of new parks and problems in partnership, but Domenden said it could also be due to the lack of tax incentives.

"Local governments have the control whether or not they would give out tax incentives. The best that we can do is to negotiate with them and convince them that giving out tax perks can also be beneficial for their municipalities," Domenden said.

Domenden, meanwhile, highlighted other benefits of locating in mariculture parks.

These include having a systematic complex for their businesses and access to services of technical groups from state universities and from the department.

Domenden, however, said that there remained problems, such as market access.

"One of our biggest difficulties is market development. We want to convince our potential locators to continue and expand operations in the park. But how can we do that if we can't give them new markets for their products?" Domenden said.

He said this problem had prompted the DA to formulate new ways to improve market access and directly link producers to their market.

ALLIANCE TUNA INTERNATIONAL, INC.

ALLIANCE TUNA INTERNATIONAL, INC.
Notice of Annual Meeting of Stockholders

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of ALLIANCE TUNA INTERNATIONAL, INC. will be held at The Penthouse, East Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Centre, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Philippines on June 26, 2007 at 3:00 in the afternoon.

The AGENDA of the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Certification of service of notice and existence of quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2005 Annual Stockholders' Meeting dated August 4, 2006 and the Special Stockholders' Meeting dated October 26, 2006.
4. Management Report to Stockholders for the year 2006;
5. Approval of the Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2006;
6. Ratification of all acts of the Board of Directors and Management during the year 2006;
7. Amendment of Article II Sec. 8 & Article III Sec. 1-A of the By-Laws:
8. Election of the Board of Directors for the ensuing term;
9. Election of External Auditors;
10. Such other business as may properly come before it.
11. Adjournment

In case you cannot attend the meeting in person and you wish to be represented thereat, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a proxy instrument to the office of the Corporate Secretary, 1205 East Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Centre, Exchange Road, OPrtigas Center, Pasig City, not later than 5:00pm of June 22, 2007.

Only stockholders of record as of June 11, 2007 shall be entitled to vote at the 2006 Annual Stockholders' Meeting

ATTY. MA. ERLINDA R. CALAÑGI
Corporate Secretary & Legal Counsel

Korean firm to build hotel in Subic

A SOUTH KOREAN FIRM IS building in Subic a $3-million, 17-story condominium hotel that would be the first high-rise building in the freeport, according to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

SBMA administrator Armand Arreza said in a statement that KT Global Subic Inc. will develop, manage and operate the residential and hotel complex called Subic Ampelos Tower.

"KT Global's investment commitment is the 10th biggest among the projects approved in 2006," Arreza said.

He said KT Global's parent unit, KT Construction Co. Ltd., is engaged in real estate development and operation of condominiums, hotels and other related activities and plans to build six condominium buildings in the freeport zone.

In the same statement, KT Global president Hong Shik Kim said the company was partnering with SBMA given its thrust to provide high-quality and comfortable units to the market.

Hong said the project reflected the rapid advancements in technology and the growing need for quality housing, hotel rooms and other amenities.

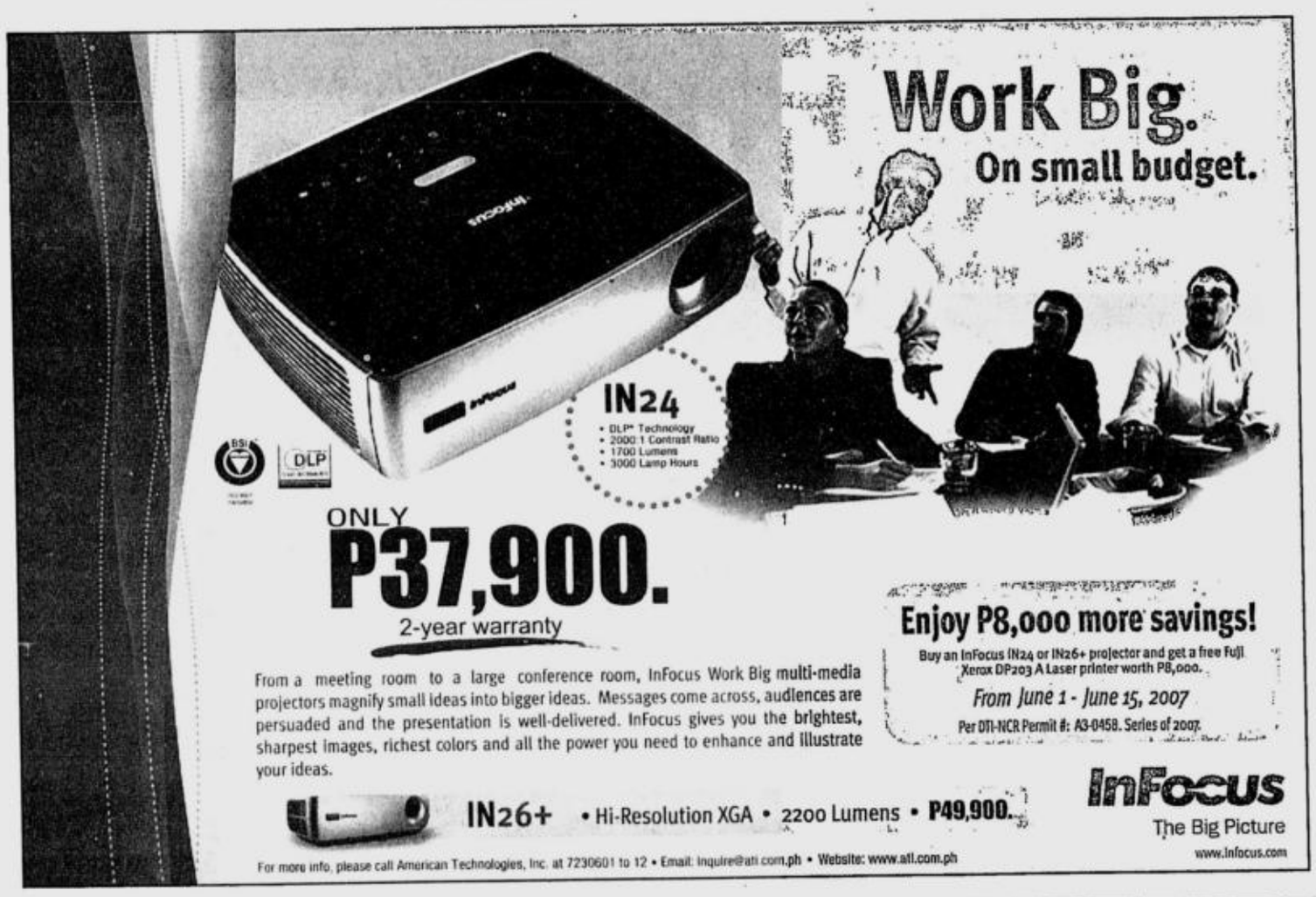
He said Ampelos Tower would feature conference rooms that are ideal for formal and nonformal gatherings, gift shops, a recreation place with spas, massage clinics, swimming pools and sports facilities, while the rest of the building would have the housing units.

Further, Hong said the company was aiming to complete the first two condominium buildings within the next three to four years in a 14,000-sq. m. lot inside the Subic Commercial Light and Industrial Park.

Another four condominium buildings will be completed within the next six to 10 years, he said.

"Our company is dedicated to providing a hassle-free living environment wherein our clients can enjoy all of the benefits of our safe, attractive and inviting facilities," Hong said. "Unlike many other realty companies that are solely concerned with profit generation, our primary objective is to maintain the highest achievable level of customer satisfaction."

The Ampelos Tower project would need 100 employees in its initial operations, and will expand its workforce to 200 in five years. *Ronnel W. Domingo*



Tanduay ... From page B7

In a recent market study of the US liquor market, sales of rum grew 62 percent from 1990 to 2005, while the whole liquor industry grew by only 7 percent. Brandy and vodka sales grew by 35 percent and 30 percent respectively in the same period.

"Without losing our focus on the brandy threat, we shall continue with rum as the primary driver of our business," Tan said.

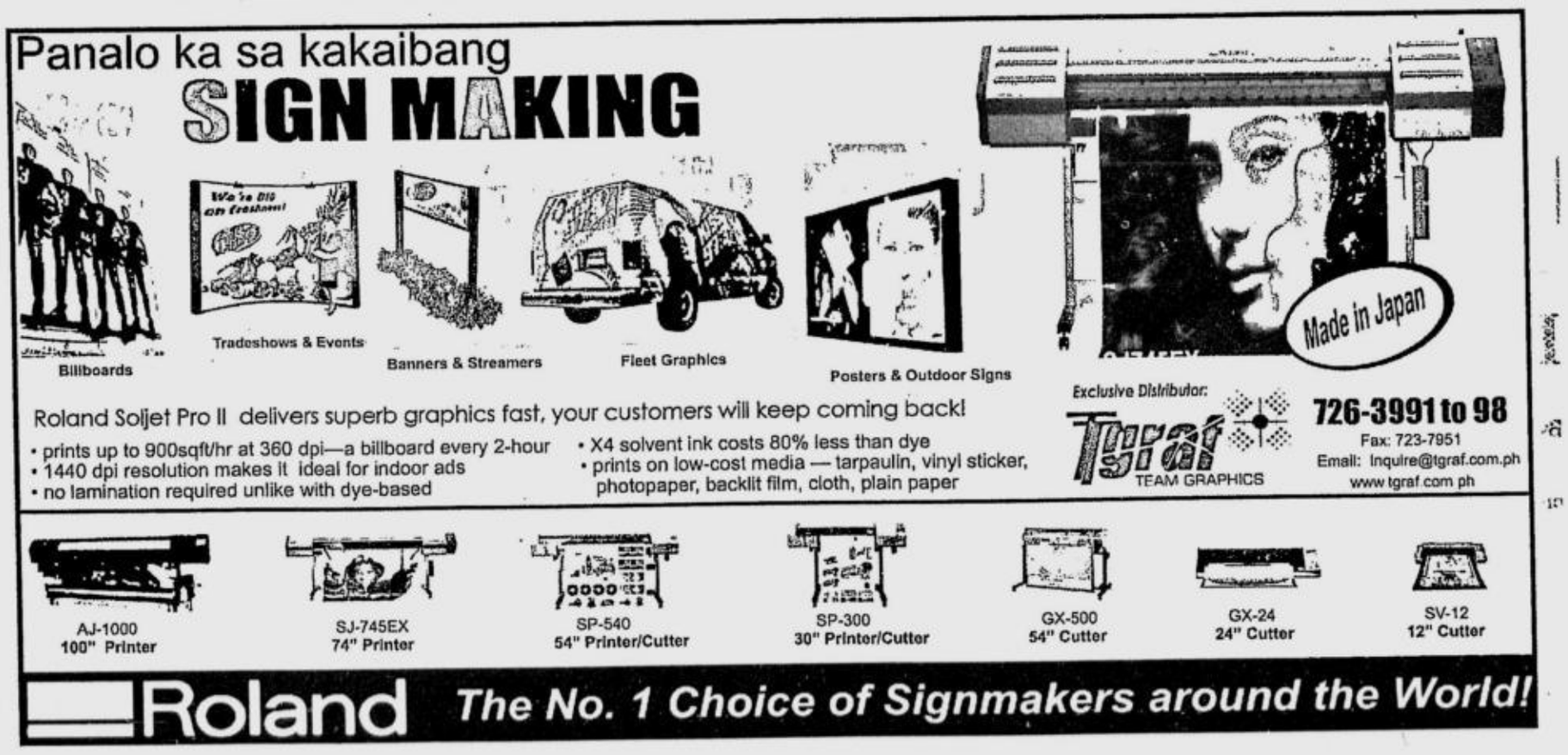
Tan said that Tanduay had designed a new advertising program for its rum products to seize the young drinkers segment of the market. He, however, did not give details of this program.

Also, to ride on the growing popularity of brandy, Tan said Tanduay had launched the new Barcelona brandy, improving on taste, aroma and packaging.

He also said that Tanduay was optimistic about the vodka category with its Cossack Vodka brand.

In the meantime, Tanduay Holdings' revenue in 2006 was 5 percent lower that the previous year's level at P6.6 billion. This was attributed to the lower sales volume of rum and brandy.

Double-digit increases however were posted by gin and vodka, the company said.



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Nimble economic body needed

SyCip pushes for a group that can help economy adapt to changes

SGV & Co. founder Washington SyCip

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

IN THE '70s, WASHINGTON SYCIP INvited Texas Instruments to check out the Philippines and invest in the country.

The TI people accepted the invitation and went around the country to look at its investment sites. They went back to SyCip and told him they wanted to set up a factory in Baguio.

SyCip had a problem—the only processing zone then was in Bataan and the large US semiconductor firm wanted Baguio. They needed to locate in a processing zone to avail of the tax and duty free importation of equipment as production was geared for the export market.

The pundit of Philippine business, who founded SGV & Co., the country's largest accounting firm, went to then Trade and Industry Minister Roberto V. Ongpin and presented to him the issue.

"No problem," Ongpin told SyCip. He would draft a decree for Baguio to be declared a processing zone which then President Ferdinand Marcos would sign the following day.

"You can do that?" SyCip asked, to which Ongpin simply said, "of course ... we're under martial law."

SyCip related this incident during the oath-taking ceremony of the Asian Institute of Management Alumni Board of Directors oath-taking ceremonies last Friday to illustrate why he thinks the Philippines needs a "non-political economic body that can respond easily to changes taking place in many countries that affect the Philippines."

TI today is the country's largest exporter at $3 billion a year. In fact, it recently announced it was investing another $1 billion in the country.

SyCip said if the TI incident had happened today, it would have taken Congress years to pass a law that would have created a processing zone in Baguio, in which case, the US firm would not have waited and would have gone elsewhere with its investment.

This is not to say that SyCip is pushing for martial law rule nor a dictatorship. But he pointed out the world is volatile today, with economic changes happening everyday. And the country needs to be able to respond quickly.

"The changes are so rapid. China exports tuna to the US duty free. This killed the tuna industry in General Santos. Can you wait for Congress to pass legislation? This will take 3 to 4 years."

SyCip proposes that "an economic group of technocrats, perhaps alumni of the AIM, be formed. The group can then decide on matters affecting the economy, but is non-political. Later, Congress may "review the group's actions after year."

In his address to AIM alumni and professors, which he called a dialog, he mused about why "with so many talented people, why we do not have national unity?"

"If we have unity, we should be ahead of our neighboring countries," he stated.

According to Sycip, what hinders the country is, "we are an island nation."

A second factor—and he said some people, including his family, might get mad at him—is, "we have too many lawyers."

"If we settle things with lawyers, it is to their interest to prolong (the settlement of a case) as they get larger fees," he said.

He cites South Korea and Taiwan, which followed Japan's path of encouraging engineers instead of lawyers. The Philippines graduates thousands of lawyers every year although it needs more engineers.

A third factor, according to SyCip, is "a premature democracy, where the emphasis is on me, not we."

As he has done in previous speeches, SyCip cited the flying tigers of Asia—South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia—which had no Western democracy, when they succeeded economically. He defines democracy as "one man, one vote and freedom of media."

He said in the economic successes of Asia, first there was economic freedom before political freedom.

In the early 70s, the Philippines had a brief taste of economic freedom.

In 1973, he cited that the country grew by 9.4 percent—the highest growth rate in the country's history. In 1974, growth was 7.2 percent. This, from a growth of 4.2 percent in 1972, the year Martial Law was declared.

"At that time, there was discipline—teenagers were home by midnight. But there was overconfidence in the success of the first two years. In a way, economic freedom was restricted because of cronies, some businessmen did not want to go into business."

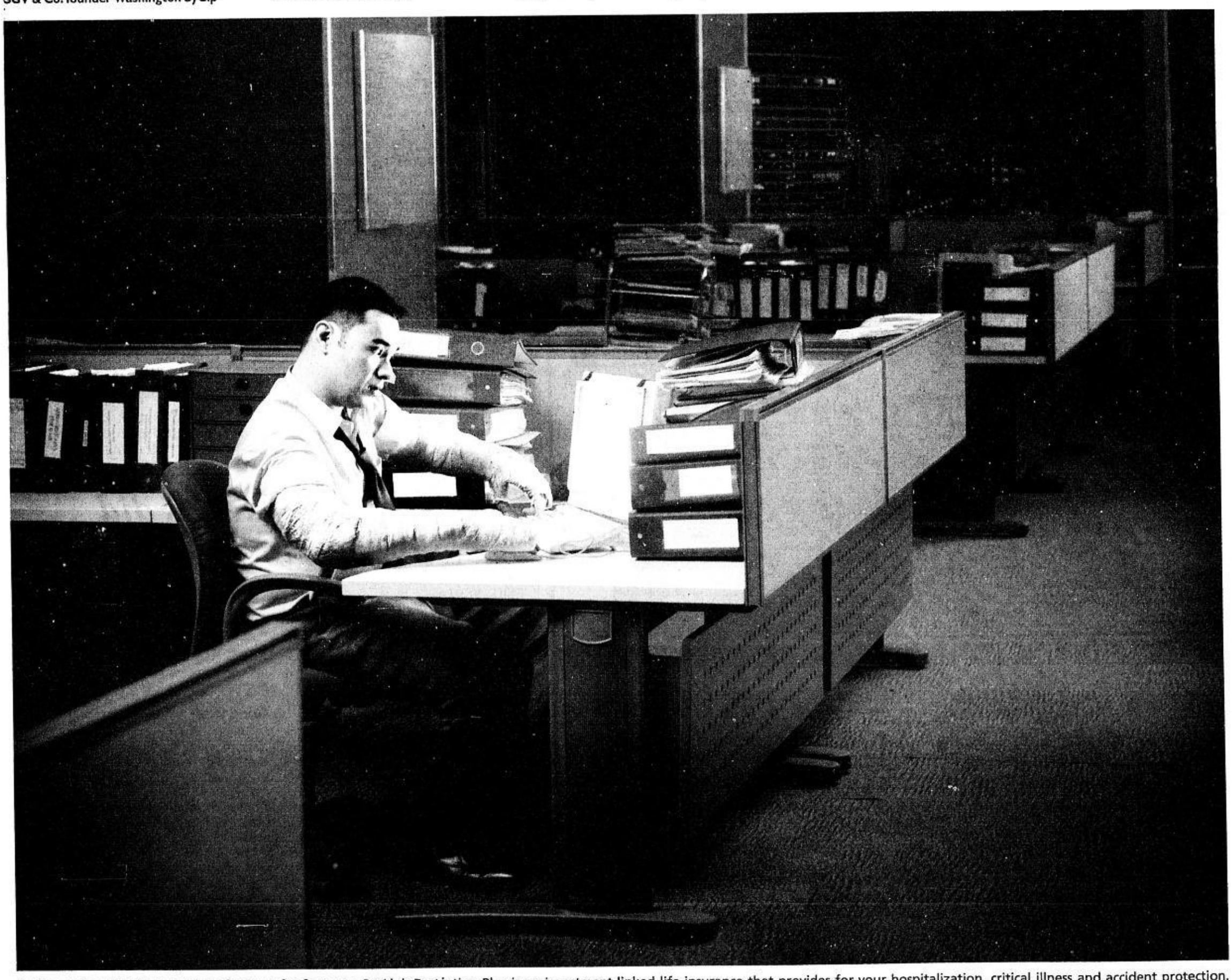
But he said major projects like the North and South Luzon Expressways were finished.

"There were no professional squatters along the expressway who had to be paid off, again with the help of lawyers."

In a talk with the Irish prime minister, SyCip learned how Ireland's leaders dealt with their problem: First, they gathered all of Ireland's political parties and made them agree on one economic agenda, but with complete transparency.

Investments flowed into Ireland and the young people who left to work in the UK or the US started coming back with the economic progress. As to conflicts in parts of Ireland, the prime minister told SyCip that these would eventually be resolved once economic progress reaches the critical areas.

"If we have national unity here, we will solve the Muslim problem. I don't know whether this is wishful thinking. We should not always look at the American model."



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Cory says empowering via microlending, not elections

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FORMER PRESIDENT CORAZON C. Aquino recently exhorted the private sector to help raise P5 billion within five years in an initiative that she said was a way of shielding the poor "from being exploited yet again in future political exercises."

During the general membership meeting of the Management Association of the Philippines where Ms Aquino was guest of honor, she talked about microenterpise development as a highly effective strategy toward empowering the people rather than the recent election that has yet to be wrapped up.

The heroine of Edsa People Power in 1986 lamented the violence that claimed the lives of 59 candidates and 55 supporters, unabated vote-buying, the fielding of nuisance candidates and dubious party-list groups, the wholesale rigging of elections in remote areas, and the slow count that "has left the door wide open for all forms of cheating."

"To be fair, there have been bright spots," she said, mentioning the victory of Fr. Ed Panlilio as governor of Pampanga, and the "new avenues of hope" that the Kapatiran party opened.

"The inspiring stories spawned by (Panlilio's) campaign—from the flood of volunteers from all sectors flocking to his camp to the spontaneous outpouring of support from common folk who brought their own food to his rallies—remind of our own experiences more than 21 years ago," Ms Aquino said.

Still, she said such rays of sunshine hardly lit up the traditionally gloomy electoral landscape.

"It behooves us, therefore, to help empower the people at the most basic level—regaining their dignity through decent livelihood—and weaning them from patronage politics," she said.

The former Chief Executive said the way to do this was lending to microenterpises, which she said she had observed over the past few years to be a highly effective strategy toward empowerment due to the initiative of committed microfinance institutions (MFIs).

"One of the things I have come to realize is that the first step in a 'people-empowered' antipoverty strategy is to unlock the potential of the millions of Filipinos who have been cut off from mainstream economic life," she said.

"This is what I call the internal dimension of people power," she added. "Beyond the practical imperative of putting food on the table, microenterpise bears this equally vital empowering facet."

Also during the meeting, MAP president Alberto F. del Rosario announced that the group had decided to support PinoyME (microenterpise) Foundation, which Ms Aquino leads, as part of its thrust on corporate social responsibility.

"Instead of reinventing the wheel or having a 'stand-alone' project on microfinance, the MAP Board (of governors agreed) that MAP should join the multi-sectoral social consortium which has established the PinoyME movement," Del Rosario said.

For this, MAP signed a memorandum of understanding with PinoyME, following which MAP's 775 members were encouraged to work on designated projects.

He said MAP members had the option of taking part through fund raising (by buying financial instruments, investing on a project, or alloting funds for lending); provide management capacity building support to microenterprises; provide market opportunities for microenterpise products or; promote corporate initiatives in using microenterprises as part of one's core business.

PinoyME, which was launched January, aims at raising P5 billion over the next five years, which would be for lending to some five million households.

"Our 5-5-5 goal is no arbitrary number," Ms Aquino said. "We are targeting five million clients because that number approximates the number of families living below the poverty line."

She explained that P5 billion in capital was the minimum PinoyME would need to augment the current equity and deposit base of the MFIs, which today are catering to between one and two million microentrepreneurs already.

Further, she said five years was a realistic time frame within which to make the impact that PinoyME was aiming for.

In an interview after the meeting, Ms Aquino said she was convinced of the results of microfinancing "because this is a continuing effort, this is not dole out."

"I am into this because I have observed (microenterprises and the projects of MFIs in different parts of the country)," she said. "I have touched base with (lenders and borrowers) and I was inspired by what I have seen."

The 'bitter pill' controversy—big pharma reacts

MAPping the Future

by Niceto S. Poblador

MY RECENT ARTICLES ON BIG PHARMAceutical firms (Big Pharma's Bitter Pill, Parts 1 and 2) appear to have caught the attention of many of my intended readers.

Indeed, a Senior Corporate Affairs manager of Pfizer Philippines, one of the companies that I cited, took the time to respond to me by email. Her message reads in part as follows:

"We at Pfizer read with particular interest your two-part column series on Big Pharma's Bitter Pill (Part One and Part Two) which appeared in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on March 12 and 19, respectively. We truly appreciate the space you gave briefly explaining the side of the pharmaceutical industry and wish to forward some of our thoughts to you in relation to the topics you have discussed in your column."

The rest of the message notes certain portions of my articles and presents relevant company information.

Let me share my thoughts on three of these comments:

(1) "During the special congressional session on Feb. 20, 2007, which included deliberations to amend the intellectual property code, Pfizer had just one representative present among nongovernment organizations, government officials, public-interest groups and other pharmaceutical members of the Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines.

The intellectual property code is critical. Without a robust and effective patent protection system, we are likely to see a dramatic slowdown in the development of new medicines to treat diseases."

This "dramatic slowdown" is already happening. According to GlaxoSmithKline CEO Jean-Pierre Garnier (Fortune March 21, 2005), R&D productivity in Big Pharma has been "going down the toilet."

While R&D outlay increased 15 times over the last 20 years, the number of new drugs turned out by the industry annually has actually declined.

William Haseltine, founder and former CEO of Human Genome Sciences, attributes this low productivity to inefficiencies and sluggishness arising from bigness, and the highly bureaucratic, hierarchical integrated structure and organization of pharmaceutical firms.

This decline in productivity is taking place under a strict regime of patent protection enjoyed by pharmaceutical companies. This leads one to doubt the effectiveness of intellectual property rights protection in insuring a steady supply of drugs to serve the needs of the increasing numbers of potential users all over the world.

Indeed, I believe that the patent system is a major reason for the failure of the industry to meet the increasing expectations of their customers.

Because large pharmaceutical firms jealously guard their exclusive rights to their inventions and discoveries, the industry is unable to maximize value by combining these complementary knowledge assets.

(2) "According to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, the industry invests up to 20 percent of their revenues back into R&D, making it the highest R&D percentage across all industries including aeronautics, telecommunications and transportation."

We have reasons to believe that all this money is being put to waste because they are invested in an R&D model that has long outlived its usefulness.

This old model has become outmoded in the light of developments—and confluence—of exciting new fields in biotechnology and related sciences.

Industry leaders such as Pfizer's Jeffrey Kindler and GSK's Garnier are moving in the general direction of breaking up their huge R&D organizations into smaller, more agile, relatively self-contained research units, each focused on a specialized field of work.

These complementary research teams may be linked together either under the usual corporate structure or as parts of a value network of strategic alliances and partnerships.

By outsourcing skills and specialties to small, upstart biotech operations located all over the globe, pharmaceutical firms will be able to produce a wide array of drugs more effectively and without the need the of huge investments in product development.

In this way, drugs and medicines can be produced more efficiently, and developers will no longer be under severe pressures to recoup their investments in R&D by charging inordinately high prices over the life of their patents to a relatively small number of affluent patients, and depriving countless others of the curative benefits of their products.

By pursuing strategies of collaboration and sharing of complementary knowledge resources, the various players in the industry will be able to create much more value for everyone, not the least among which are their customers.

(3) "With well-researched medicines, patients are assured that the medicines they take is the exact same medicines used in the trials that have proven their therapeutic benefits and whose efficacy has been published and confirmed by the medical community over time."

I have noted in my earlier column (Part II) that the shift towards personalized medicine precludes the need for producing at such great cost "one-size-fits-all" drugs and medicines.

Recent development in biotechnology make it possible to identify the unique medical needs of patients through their genetic make up, and to develop patient-specific cures that are infinitely more effective—and much less costly.

The industry is inexorably moving in new directions. It doesn't seem to make sense to justify traditional practices by defending the old regime.

Instead, drug companies must start paving the way for the new one, both in their laboratories and production lines, as well as in their press releases and public statements.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. He is the author of the book "STRATEGY deMYTHicized: Why Today's Business Models Fail to Deliver." Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

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PDI (June 4)

What five friends did with their love for food

GUILLY'S ISLAND IS A PET PROJECT among fun-loving friends: The husband and wife tandem of Noel and Arlene Aldaba, Noel's brothers Ramon and Marco, and childhood buddy Raul "Cricket" Santiago III. "When we were young, we all loved to go out, have fun, drink and eat," Noel reminisced. "We all love food. Period. That's the basic reason why we went into food business."

Noel designed the restaurant himself—from the cozy booths, trendy lighting, sophisticated audio system, to the overall nautical theme. Upon entering, visitors will encounter an interesting conversation piece covering one whole wall: A gigantic treasure map. The map more than caps the restaurant's nautical concept, it speaks of a fascinating tale behind Guilly's Island Paseo 3 and the partnership that brought it to life.

Paseo 3 is the latest addition to Paseo De Sta. Rosa, a commercial center in Santa Rosa, Laguna. It is part of the Greenfield Development Corp. masterplanned Greenfield City.

The Aldabas, who belong to the same company in the automotive industry, were assigned in its US and other Asian offices before finally settling in Laguna. Noel's keen eyes swiftly saw the area's great business potential and called on his partners to start a new venture.

That Guilly's was sited in a prime location in Paseo 3 was somehow... a kismet. "Another restaurant was supposed to occupy that space but it did not come to be," Noel shared. Greenfield then offered the spot to the partners and that was the start of their voyage.

Good food, great service

Guilly's Island tweaked the menu to cater to young hip crowd who go for all-time Pinoy favorites such as pork sisig, spicy gambas, tuna belly and boneless crispy pata.

"Our protocol is to serve the patrons within 15 minutes upon ordering," he disclosed.

"We also remembered what it's like to get bad service. We kept that in mind and made sure it doesn't happen to Guilly's," added Cricket.

Barely two weeks since it first opened doors to the public, Guilly's has already captured a hefty slice of the market. Frequent patrons consist of the corporate crowd from the industrial zone.

Noel makes it a point to talk to customers. He discovered their patrons are not limited to Sta. Rosa residents. "In fact, many of them hail from Calamba, Biñan, Batangas, Cavite."

RAUL Santiago III, Noel and Arlene Aldaba

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TÜV Rheinland Philippines Inc. is registered under the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC). The company has certified over 350 firms since 1991, 80 percent of which are multinational corporations.

In order to further support the local industry, TÜV Rheinland Philippines Inc. established its Philippine Laboratory located at Unit 8, La Fuerza Plaza I, Don Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City to undertake electrical safety testing. This is also in response to the call of government regulators for more active participation of the private sector in ensuring consumer protection. The company is equipped to test and certify a wide range of products for compliance with national and international requirements. Performing the product approval at TÜV Rheinland laboratory means that all work is done at the laboratory. All necessary work such as testing, documentation and certification is done at the site.

Educational corporations

From page B2-4

schools established for foreign diplomatic personnel and their dependents, and other foreign temporary residents.

The English proficiency classes that cater to Korean students which have mushroomed in the major urban centers fall squarely under the latter exception.

Regardless of the nature of its corporate structure, educational institutions have to report to two regulatory agencies: To the SEC for corporate and financial reporting purposes, and to DepEd in connection with their compliance with educational policies.

An educational institution organized as a stock corporation is covered by the provisions of the Corporation Code on, among others, the composition of its governing body (board of directors), required approvals on certain corporate actions, and declaration of dividends (from unrestricted retained earnings).

Compared to stock corporations, the rules on organization, operation and reporting are less strict for nonstock corporations.

The liberality is premised on the theory that nonstock corporations are organized for lofty social objectives, not to gain profit; hence, they do not require strict monitoring.

Whether or not that premise is, in the light of prevailing circumstances, still valid is debatable.

Going through the nonstock route, however, has its downside also.

Unlike a stock corporation, a nonstock educational institution does not have a free hand in the organization of its board of trustees.

The law requires its board to have not less than five, but not more than 15, members. And that the number of the trustees shall be in multiples of five, i.e., five, 10 or 15.

Unless a different format is provided for in the articles of incorporation, the first elected set of trustees have to classify themselves in such a way that the term of office of one-fifth of their number shall expire every year.

When the term of the initial batch of trustees expires, those subsequently elected shall hold office for five years.

If a vacancy occurs before the expiration of the term, the replacement trustee can serve only for the unexpired period.

The fixed term arrangement, which is similar to public offices with fixed tenures, is aimed at ensuring consistency in the administration of the affairs of the educational institution and, at the same time, encouraging the infusion of fresh faces in the governing board.

(For feedback, please write to <rpalabrica@inquirer. com. ph>.)

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"When Our Customers Call, They Want Immediate Answers"

-American Express on PLDT D800

High and strict standards of customer service are pillars of the American Express brand according to American Express Bank President Mr. Ian T. Fish. These standards have been doctrine for the company since its establishment in the Philippines.

The American Express Bank Philippines main office reflects modernity contrasted with a proud history. The first thing that you see in its reception is the picture of the very first American Express Co. office in Escolta Manila, circa 1916. The grainy black and white images of eager workers in straw hats aboard ancient carriages of yore forms a curiously strong connection to the efficient hum of the modern American Express, high in the Makati skyline. The quiet, and solid, commitment to the customer satisfaction is palpable.

"The American Express products we offer in the Philippines are aimed at a smaller group of affluent people. It is our aim to give this very special group of people the very best service they deserve," Fish says before adding emphatically, "When our customers call they want immediate answers."

And that's exactly what they get with the PLDT D800 service which American Express has subscribed to. The domestic hotline CRM solution serves the widest customer base in the country. Especially now, as they have opened their D800 numbers to SMART and Talk n' Text mobile subscribers, making their D800 service the most accessible hotline, available 24/7. Now, an additional 25 million mobile subscribers can access their toll-free number.

American Express serves a quality market, not one based on volume. "It's not how many thousands or millions of customers we have, but the quality of service we provide them," according to Mr. Fish. Surely, that quality is enhanced by a stronger, round-the-clock hotline. Thanks to PLDT D800, the toll-free service is available to cardmembers who may need to reach American Express through their SMART mobile phones.

"The best benefit of having PLDT D800 lines is providing our customers with greater accessibility, especially during the times they need it most," concurs Grace D. Limjap, Card Marketing Head for American Express. "So far we've been getting positive feedback from our customers, they're very satisfied with the service."

More than anything it's the personal touch which truly differentiates American Express. Mr. Fish tells us that "American Express has always had a very strong drive to answer the phone correctly. It has to be answered the fastest time possible, and it has to be answered immediately by a human operator, with very minimal machine talk time."

There are people on duty all day for American Express and they are closely monitored by management, almost to an obsessive level. The amiable Fish, with typical English dry wit and aplomb continues, "We try to instill a culture in this company: if the phone's ringing, pick it up!"

Even during the height of Milenyo, American Express voice lines operated normally, thanks to the robust and redundant infrastructure of PLDT. With American Express, this is the crucial differentiator to support its goal of providing "premium products to premium people". And through PLDT's D800 and other voice services, American Express will continue to raise the bar for customer service.

The American Express 24-Hour Customer Service Hotline numbers are 814-4777, PLDT and Smart subscribers can call its toll free numbers 1-800-10-8144777 from anywhere within the Philippines.

For more information on D800 and PLDT's voice services, call 177 or 688-2700, or you can dial 1-800-100-BIZSOL. You can also email bizsol@pldt.com.ph or log on to www.pldt.com.ph.

Stephanie Ong, PLDT Senior Relationship Manager

Ian Fish, American Express Bank Philippines, Inc. President

Grace Limjap, American Express Bank Philippines, Inc. Card Marketing Head

BUSINESS Monday

Educational corporations

Corporate Securities Info

Raul J. Palabrica

IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL TODAY FOR MOST of the country's primary and secondary students.

College students have another week of free time to enjoy before they return to the campus.

Thanks to our youthful population and belief in education as the most effective route to personal progress, educational institutions have become big business in our country.

Until some enterprising people saw the business potential of schools and colleges, the educational institutions in the country operated as nonstock corporations under the supervision of religious or philanthropic organizations.

The money the schools earned from their operation, after deducting administrative and maintenance costs, was channeled back to the school coffers, not to the pocket of the stockholders.

Now, there's a choice. Stockholders who want to maintain the integrity of their educational objective can go nonstock. If they believe the interests of business and education can mix, they can organize into a stock corporation.

Restrictions

Stock or nonstock, the law states that no application for incorporation of an educational institution shall be approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission without the favorable recommendation of the Department of Education.

And rightly so, because as the primary regulator of schools, the DepEd is in the best position to determine whether the proposed corporation and the people behind it are capable of taking on the education task.

Except for those established by religious groups and mission boards, the Constitution restricts the right to own educational institutions to Filipino citizens or corporations where Filipinos own at least 60 percent of the capital stock.

The ownership percentage may be increased by Congress if it believes there is a need to strengthen Filipino participation in the operation and management of educational institutions.

On top of the ownership requirement, the Constitution vests solely on Filipino citizens the right to control and administer the operation of learning centers.

Exclusivity

As a general rule, no educational institution is allowed to operate for the exclusive benefit of foreigners, or if a group of foreigners compose more than one-third of its student population.

The restriction does not apply, however, to

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MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ◎ TUESDAY FITNESS ◎

Pinoy artist's work in 'Meet the Robinsons' is a scream

Fil-Am artist Joe Mateo not only helped conceive the riotous pet T-Rex dinosaur in the new Disney animated feature, but also voiced it

By Dexter R. Matilla
Contributor

DISNEY'S NEW ANIMATED movie "Meet the Robinsons" is big in every way. Big cast, big-name voices, and big ideas all throughout.

But perhaps none is bigger than the biggest character in the movie, Tiny, the Robinsons' T-Rex pet. The hard-to-miss—quite obviously—Tiny is sure to steal the scene in one sequence and elicit laughter once he speaks.

The voice is Filipino-American Joe Mateo's. A Fine Arts Advertising graduate from the University of Santo Tomas, Mateo also co-wrote the script and did storyboard work for the movie, which is based on the book "A Day with Wilbur Robinson" by William Joyce.

Already based in LA, Mateo said it was his wife, a former classmate in UST and already working for Disney's Art Classics Department at the time, who informed him of a job opening at the studio.

"It was an opportunity," Mateo said, who since then has done artworks for such beloved Disney movies as "Pocahontas," "Hunchback of Notre Dame" and "Home on the Range."

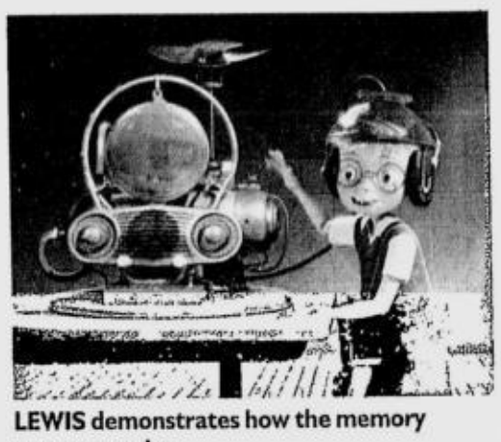
In the same way that Mateo's creativity landed him a dream job in Disney, Lewis (Jordan Fry), the main character of "Meet the Robinsons," gets the story going for the hilarious animated movie because of his inventiveness and creativity.

Left in an orphanage by his mother when he was still a baby, Lewis grows up to be a very smart kid and an inventor to boot.

Sadly, however, not knowing why his mother gave him up, Lewis is left with a hollow feeling. Wanting to be reunited with her so they can become a family again, Lewis invents the memory scanner from a couple of household items put together.

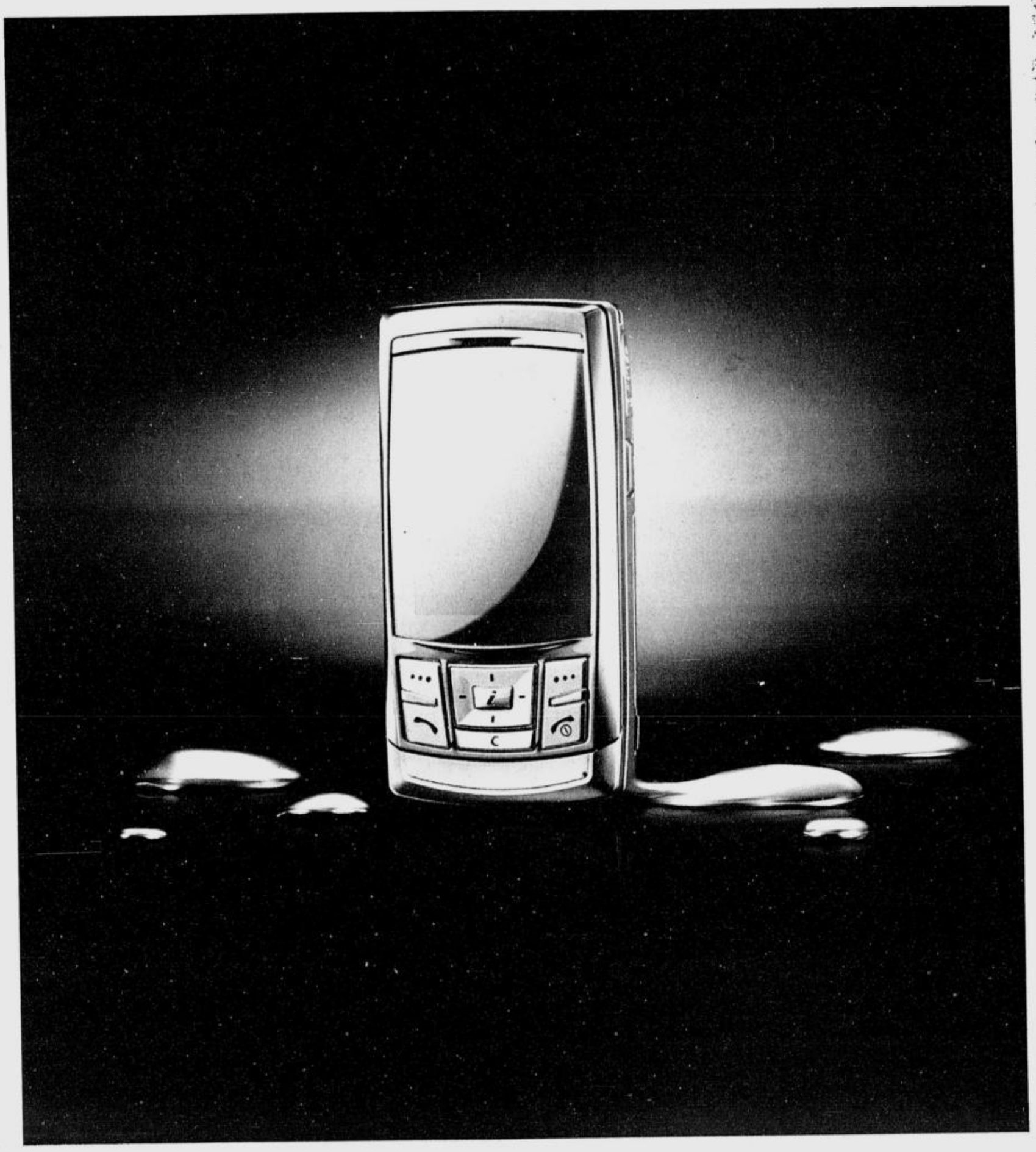
With Lewis' plan seemingly foolproof, in comes the Bowler Hat Guy who steals the memory scanner. Voiced by "Meet the Robinsons" director Steve Anderson, the Bowler Hat Guy is from the future and possibly the

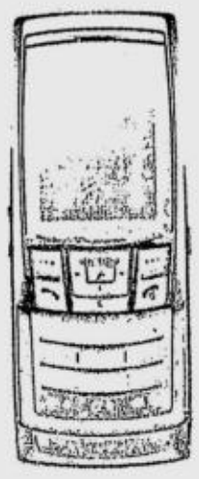
PINOY/ C4



LEWIS demonstrates how the memory scanner works.

LEWIS gives Uncle Art Robinson a high five.





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Bigay mo kay Mama yung pera
Marami na akong naipon!
May anak na ba si Allan?
Ano gusto mong pasalubong?
Magpapakasal ka na daw?
Ang ganda dito
Congrats, nakapasa ka! Ang galing mo talaga!
Ang bait ng employer ko!
Bro, ulats sila sa akin sa basketball!
Excited na akong makita kayo!
Magpapakasal ka na ba?
Ano anak ni Junette?
Pakisabi kay Tito Inigo, Happy Birthday!
Na-renew ang contract ko!
Sabihin mo kay Ronnie, congrats!
Kakaiba pala ang mga gamit dito!
Maganda ang panahon ngayon dito
OK maging diorce dito
Ang ganda ng mga wind
Gusto daw nila makilala si Ik
Ang taas ng Eiffel Tower!
Nagkita kam
Pare ustig ditot
Ano latest kay Bitoy?
Over talaga!
Mababait ang mga katrabaho ko dito.
Papunta ba sila Louie dito?
Pag uwi ko ipapasyal ko kayo
Iba pa rin ang Pilipinas
Text text nalang tayo!
Ingat kayo ni nanay ha
Champion kami sa Basketball!
Gumaling na ba si Edgar?
Ang ganda siguro ng anak niyo!
Kayang kaya ng Pinoy kahit saan
Ok lang!
Arang Pinas din dito
Nabilhan na ba ng pasalubong
Kamusta sila Junior?
Nalintidihan ko na ang football!
I love you
Magsasalapan si Ate Diday dito!
Miss na miss ko na boses mo.
Anong oras na dyan?

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Connect with each other with these services: SMART IDD • SMART Inter
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The need of Filipinos abroad to keep in touch with their families and loved ones back home is a basic necessity. PLDT and SMART, the biggest telecommunications networks with the most services and innovations in the country have filled that need by continuously paying tribute to the OFWs and their families by offering relevant services and programs that will ensure that they will always stay connected.

Low-cost Communications

By offering the most number of International Services, SMART surely gives various affordable ways for OFWs and their families to stay connected like SMART IDD, International Text and MMS, International Roaming, Prepaid International Voice Roaming and International 3G Video Call. Innovative services that enhance the value of cellphones for overseas Filipinos and their families are also available like SMART International Voice Text, and VoiceTXT to e-mail. These voice text services combine the emotional impact of the human voice with the convenience and affordability of text messaging.

Low-cost prepaid cards like the PLDT Budget Card can be used for both international and local calls using any PLDT landline. Using also a PLDT Budget Card, calls abroad are also much more affordable, with calls to the US as low as Php 3.00 per minute.

Relevant Programs for OFWs

To better serve OFWs, SMART also launched the SMART Pinoy OFW Program in 2006. Under the program, SMART introduces initiatives that address the various needs of overseas Filipinos, such as the SMART Pinoy Load Rewards Program, Libreng Tawag for the emergency calling needs of OFWs and OFW families, and many others. SMART Pinoy has also brought joy to thousands of OFWs overseas through a series of overseas roadshows in various countries around the world since 2006.

Next Generation Remittances

SMART's innovations in international services continue in the area of remittances like the SMART Padala service, highlighting the growing importance in addressing the needs of the huge overseas Filipino community.

In early 2007, SMART launched its SMART Services Hub at the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, Spain. This new mobile commerce platform will enable Filipinos in the Middle East, Europe and elsewhere to remit funds using their cellphones. Employing an innovative mix of advance mobile commerce technologies and a collaborative business model, SMART will accomplish this through partnerships with cellphone operators and commercial banks in countries hosting large Filipino communities.

Nurturing Entrepreneurship

To complement its innovations in remittance services, SMART is participating in various

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e Text • SMART International 3G Video Call • PLDT IDD • PLDT Budget Card

rams aimed at helping overseas Filipinos and their families make smarter use of the money they send back to the country. In 2006, SMART launched the SMART Pinoy Reintegration gram with the OWWA encouraging Filipinos working abroad to set up small businesses at e. The company jumpstarted this program by cooperating with the Philippine government's paign to promote entrepreneurship among Filipinos overseas in Taiwan, particularly by ng airtime load as SMART Load agents, setting up SMART Bro Internet Cafes or serving as RT Padala encashment centers.

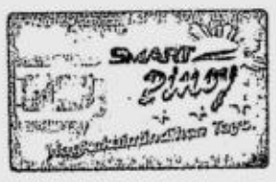
T Global's Customized Products and Services

ognizing the needs of the OFWs abroad, SMART and PLDT Global Corporation collabo- 1 to introduce International Prepaid GSM services in Hong Kong and Singapore. Designed ter to the specific needs of Filipinos working abroad, PLDT Global launched 1528 SMART SMART Pinoy respectively. PLDT Global President and CEO Alfredo S. Panlilio explains T Global's mission this way "Our fulfillment comes from the fact that we bring happiness to fellow Filipinos who toil outside to provide a better future for their families through the ucts and services we offer them." Starting with the cheapest rates in calling and texting to Philippines, PLDT Global offers a host of services and products no other foreign telecommu- tions company can provide. The value of family and the emerging culture of cellular and less technologies create a need that only PLDT Global can understand and fulfill.

PLDT Global has had a foothold on the OFW's needs ever since they launched 1528 SMART in Hong Kong. Apart from cheaper call and text rates, 1528 SMART continuously introduces innovative services to serve our fellow Filipinos better. Using 1528 SMART, Filipinos can remit money to their loved ones for as low as HK$1 and just recently, International Voice Text was launched with the aim to make the communication experience more personal at the cost and speed of a text message.

In Singapore, PLDT Global has come up with SMART Pinoy which has been setting new service standards. Aside from offering a special IDD package, SMART Pinoy also offers a special international text rate which allows families of SMART Pinoy subscribers to send SMS message to Singapore for only Php1.00. "We are fighting giant players through our services tailor made for Pinoys, such as PISO Text and an array of local flavored promotions and activities." said PLDT Singapore General Manager Ricky P. Isla. PLDT Global together with SMART will continually expand the PLDT group's horizons through partnerships with various foreign operators in other parts of Asia, Europe, the U.S. and Canada.

Count on PLDT and SMART to continually offer the newest services and more innovations to bring Filipinos closer to home wherever they are.



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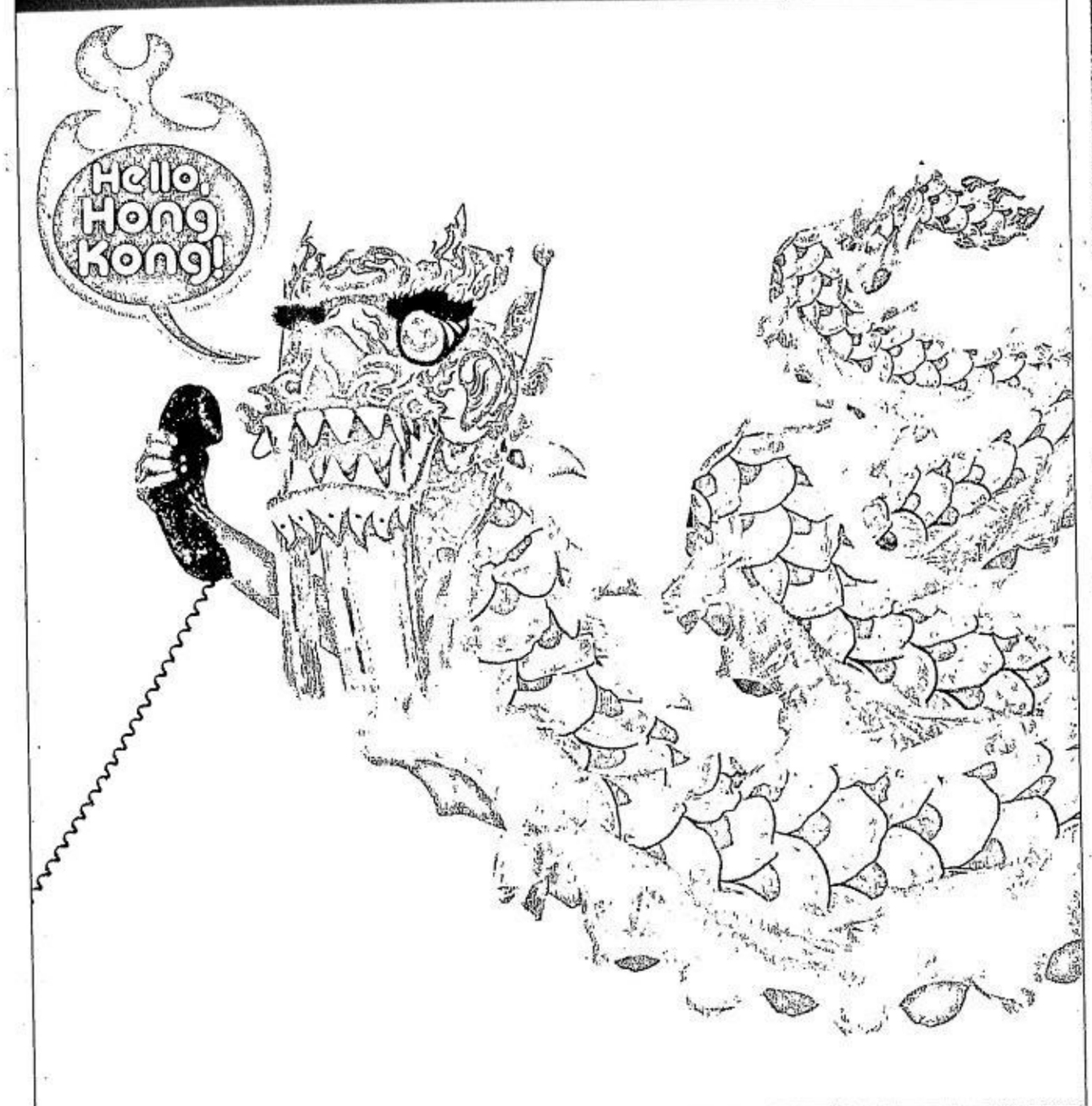

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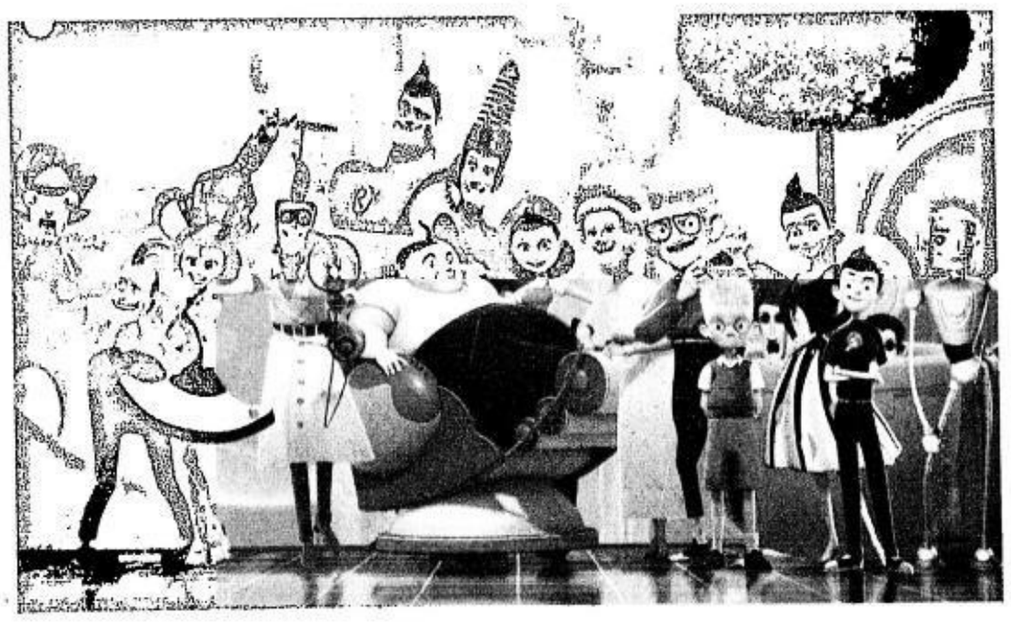


Pinoy artist's work . . .

From page C1

worst villain there is.

Back to the future

An upset Lewis returns to the orphanage, where a teenage boy about his age appears out of nowhere. Introducing himself as Wilbur Robinson (Wesley Singerman), he takes the young inventor on a ride in a space ship/time machine and brings him 30 years into the future where Lewis meets the Robinsons.

Although there are other animated movies about boy geniuses made before, "Meet the Robinsons" offers something different. Smart, engagingly witty, and unexpected with every twist and turn, "Robinsons" takes a peek into what could or couldn't have been based on the decisions made today. And while failures cannot be avoided, Lewis imparts that a lot can be learned from them.

Mateo advises anyone who wish to succeed in life to just "give everything you can."

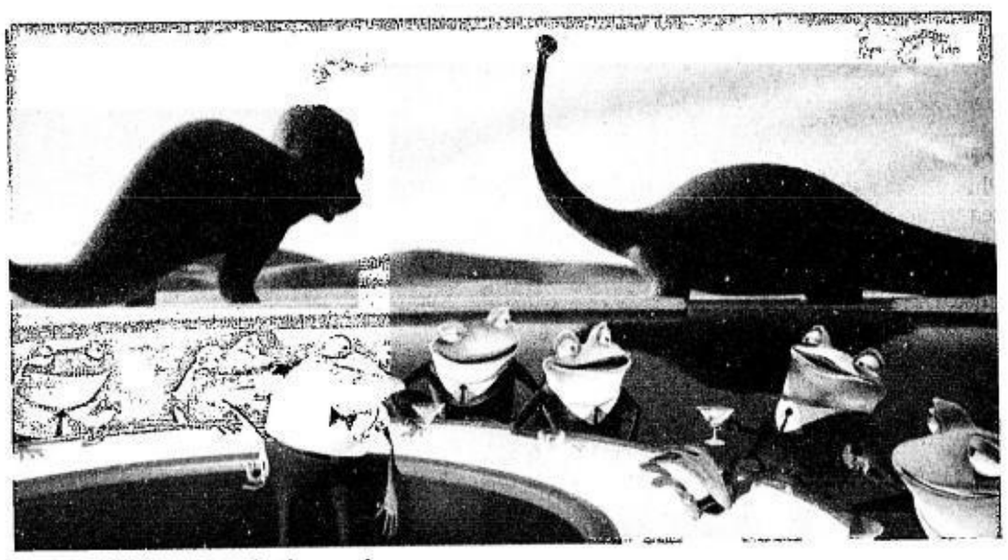
Other big-name voices in the movie include Tom Selleck, Angela Bassett, Adam West and Laurie Metcalf.

"Meet the Robinsons" opens in theaters nationwide on June 6.

E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com

LEWIS tries his invention. The movie's colorful characters (below), including Tiny, the hilarious T-Rex pet of the Robinsons household

BOWLER Hat Guy, minus the hat, monitors the Robinsons' household.



COLORFUL bar scene in the movie

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Gantimpala holds auditions

GANTIMPALA THEater Foundation is holding a general audition for actors on June 11, 4-8 p.m., at the Rehearsal Hall, Open Air Auditorium Building, Luneta, Manila.

The audition is open to professional and aspiring actors and actresses. Bring a resumé and 2" x 2" photograph in color. Call 5280603 for further details.

Gantimpala Theater, formerly known as Bulwagang Gantimpala, is one of the original dramatic-arts companies of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Its founding president and artistic director is Tony S. Espejo.

For its 30th season this year, Gantimpala is staging "Katipunan" by Bonifacio Ilagan; "Taluktok" by Leoncio P. Deriada; "Ramona Reyes ng Forbes Park" by Bienvenido Noriega Jr.; and "Bombita" by Tony Perez.

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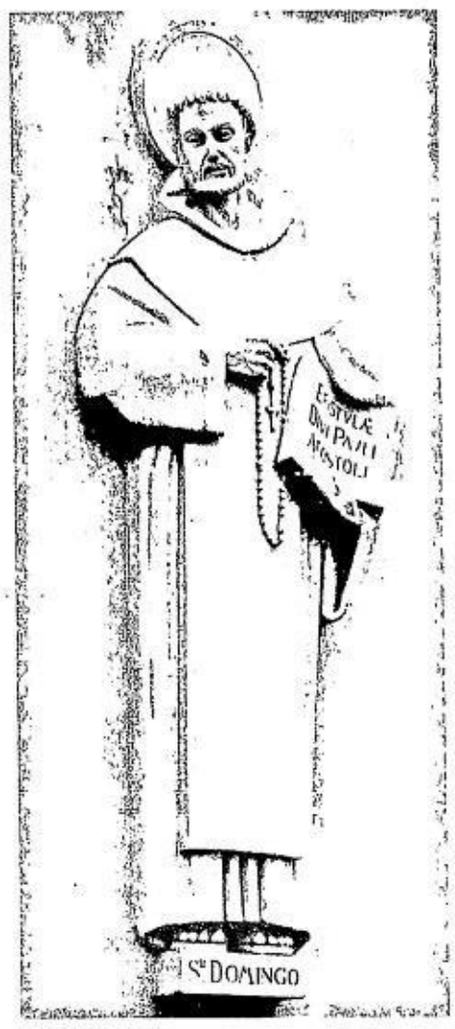
LIFESTYLE

MONTI sculpture done 1949-53 installed on the University of Santo Tomas Main Building roof deck

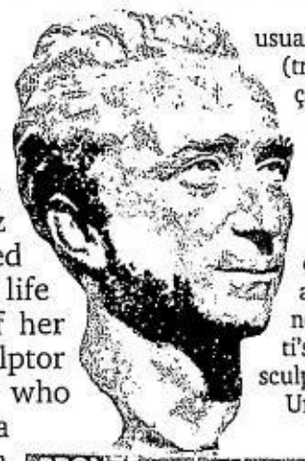
Sculptural treasures by Francesco Riccardo Monti



FAÇADE of Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City, concrete cast in silver finish in 1954

The Italian sculptor's work, although rooted in classicism, was sensitively attuned to the times

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon



BRONZE cast head portrait of Monti by Ferraroni, 1974

IT LITERALLY TOOK SILvana Ancellotti Diaz years of determined search to piece together the life story and artistic legacy of her compatriot, Italian sculptor Francesco Riccardo Monti, who left his native Cremona and a multi-awarded career in 1929, journeyed through San Remo, Nice, and New York City, before ending his wandering a year later in Manila, where he permanently stayed until his death in 1958.

Together with Ma. Victoria Herrera, a History of Art professor at the University of the Philippines, Diaz embarked on intensive research on Monti's work, tracking down extant examples of his sculptures or verifying others attributed to him, often relying on oral accounts from relatives of artists and assistants who worked directly with him.

Diaz and Herrera extensively documented information and carefully studied archival material to arrive at conclusive proof of authorship, a primary concern for any art historical study, especially for a pioneering study on a relatively unknown Italian sculptor whose major body of work was in the Philippines.

The significant outcome of their task was publicly presented in a series of exhibitions held at the University of Santo Tomas and University of the Philippines in Iloilo City, and at the recently concluded Metropolitan Museum exhibition.

To accompany the exhibition series, Herrera authored an authoritative monograph on Francesco Riccardo Monti, from where most of the information below is derived.

Monti made the Philippines his home in 1930, arriving during the halcyon days of the American colonial period when major building and infrastructure projects were at their peak. For the next 30 years, he joined forces with local architects and sculptors on major projects, either commissioned by the government or by private individuals.

His major architectural collaborations were with Juan Arellano for, among other projects, the Metropolitan Theater in Manila and the Iloilo City Municipal Hall, now the UP-Iloilo City campus.

He also worked with the architect Pablo Antonio, now National Artist, for the Administration Building of Far Eastern University and other Antonio structures.

Monti also collaborated with architect José Zaragoza, producing a collection of sculptures for the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City and other religious projects.

His most prolific collaboration, however, was with Conrado de León, founder of the House of Precast, a company that still exists in Manila. Its atelier cast and produced most of Monti's works in concrete, and is where a significant collection of his works is archived.

From adobe to concrete

Spanish colonial architecture in the Philippines is characterized by the use of Philippine adobe (volcanic tuff), lime and wood. Reinforced concrete, a technology developed in the late 19th century, was the construction material of the American colonial regime.

Reinforced concrete, a versatile material that lends itself to casting and molding, was not only used for construction but also for ornamentation since decorative elements could easily be cast from concrete. Classical column capitals and bases, statuary and sculptures usually placed on the pediment (triangular area above the façade colonnade), and moldings no longer had to be individually hand-carved.

It was only a matter of time before sculptors discovered that their works could be cast in concrete, and Monti adjusted to the new medium. Most of Monti's grand and monumental sculptures were cast in concrete.

Unknown to many Filipinos, sculptures by Monti are part of important landmarks and structures that are taken for granted in Metro Manila and other Philippine cities. Like many public architectural sculptures from the pre-World War II years, little is known about the sculptures or the identities of their makers despite the dis-

SCULPTURAL/ D2

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WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

The Pinoy Dream Academy grad sings songs from his Star Records album entitled Chad.
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GARDENIA BLACK FOREST LOAF:
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Once upon a time, in the mysterious and enchanting Black Forest region of 16th century Germany, a cake so wickedly delicious was created. Lavished layer upon layer with cherries, Kirsch (cherry brandy), chocolate shavings and whipped cream, this concoction soon became known as the Black Forest Cake.

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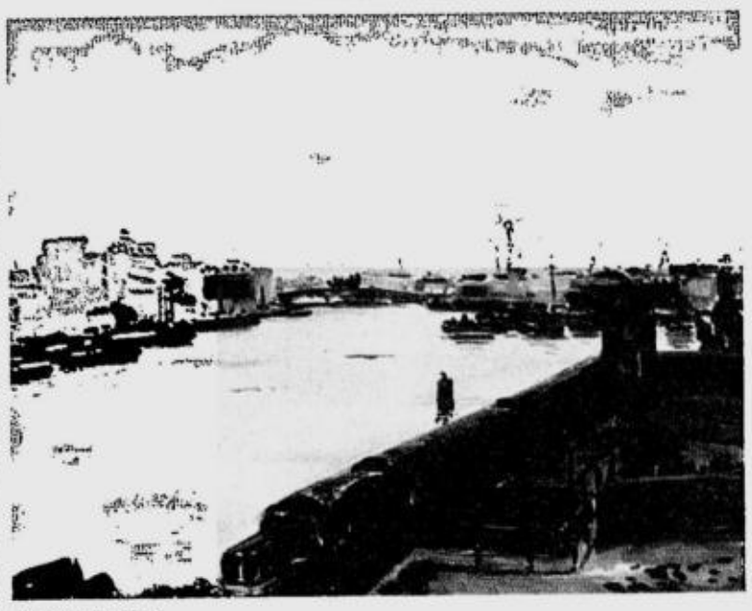
ADVT

Alcuaz holds 75th birthday show



"UNTITLED"

FEDERICO AGUILAR ALCUAZ MARKS HIS 75th birthday with a major exhibit of his works in Galerie Joaquin Main.

The show will feature pieces from the collection of the artist himself and that of his family, several of which were sourced from Germany.

"Federico Aguilar Alcuaz" will open on his birthday on June 6, 7 p.m., and will run until June 20. It will showcase 68 paintings done in the 1950s-'90s.

The exhibit includes some of the abstract works and "trilogues" the artist has come to be known for in numerous international auctions.

It also includes several tapestries he did in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in the 1980s, panoramic landscapes and cityscapes, nudes, self portraits, sketches and drawings.

Alcuaz's works are included in the collections of some 20 museums and major cultural institutions in the world such as the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona; Museum of Contemporary Art of Madrid; Gulvenkian Foundation Museum of London; Museum of Modern Art of Warsaw; Museum of Modern Art of Krakow; and Philips Cultural Museum of the Netherlands.

"UNTITLED"

"REENCUENTRO" 5

In his 50-year career, Alcuaz has exhibited in Spain, Portugal, Singapore, the United States, Germany and Poland.

Alcuaz's abstract pieces were auctioned at the Sotheby's auction of Southeast Asian paintings on April 29.

"Still Life" (31.5" x 28.75," oil on canvas) commanded a final price of S$13,200 (P409,200), or almost twice the minimum estimate of S$7,000.

Two abstract art pieces were also sold at the Christie's auction in Hong Kong on May 27.

Galerie Joaquin is at 371 P. Guevarra St. cor. Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan. Call 7239418 or 7239253; visit www.galeriejoaquin.com.

VISUAL ARTS

Syjuco returns to Penguin

CESARE A.X. SYJUCO WILL RETURN TO THE Penguin Café Gallery (Remedios Street, Malate, Manila) for the first time in 20 years through his multimedia exhibit "An Act of Bad Faith," which opens on June 7, 9 p.m., with a live-performance event featuring an all-star cast of poets, musicians and spoken-word artists. It was in Penguin where Syjuco exhibited his iconoclastic works in the 1980s and where he led the Ermita art underground. The opening night will feature poets, musicians and performers such as Vim Nadera, Maxine Syjuco and Utakan, Augusto Albor, Alwin Reamillo, Igan D'Bayan, Eghai Roxas, Nityalila, Danny Sillada, Angelo Suarez, Cos Zicarelli, Jevi-joe Vitug. The event will be hosted by Trix Syjuco and produced by Jean Marie Syjuco. Visit www.cesaresyjuco.com.

Legaspi, RP costumes from Netherlands at Ayala

BY RAYMOND Legaspi

Raymond Legaspi presents "Once upon a Daster" in ArtistSpace at Ayala Museum (Makati Avenue and De la Rosa Street, Makati). The artist drew inspiration from the loose, colorful *daster*, a favorite housewear of Filipino women. His subjects are dressed in colorful *dasters* in various poses and activities endemic to provincial settings. Call 5063493.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the museum will hold the exhibit "Embroidered Multiples: 18th - 19th Century Philippine Costumes from the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde The Netherlands," June 5-July 1. Call 7577117-21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.com.

"HAT"

Resabal at Likha-Diwa

Former journalist and now painter Cooper Resabal will present "Quiet Moments," an exhibit of watercolor landscapes of Southeast Asia. Exhibit opens on June 1 and runs until July 30 at Likha-Diwa (1 Lt. J. Francisco St., Krus na Ligas, QC). Call 9255522.

Garcias at Ricco Renzo

"HEADSTART"

Ricco Renzo Galleries & Café (LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel Air 2, Makati) will open the exhibit "Journey: Sibling Revelry III," featuring works by Marisa Garcia Romero and Paulito G. Garcia Jr., June 5- July 5. Opening cocktails tomorrow at 6 p.m. Call 8982545. Visit www.riccorenzo.com or e-mail art@riccorenzo. com.

Gonzales at West

Dennis Mallares Gonzales presents "Trapped by Fate," at West Gallery (4/L, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong). The series consists of works depicting situations in which people may be "trapped" by everyday circumstances. Gonzales, a Thirteen Artists Award recipient from the Cultural Center of the Philippines, received the artist-in-residence grant from the Vermont Studio Center in the United States in 2003. Call 6341284.

Padilla at Crucible

"FLY High"

Crucible Gallery presents Vincent Padilla's "Oubliette." The title of the exhibit comes from the French word *oublier*, meaning "to forget." Prevalent to this theme is the four-corner tower simplified into a box form. Exhibit will run June 5-17, at the Crucible Gallery (4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong). Call 6356061.

Compiled by Madelaine D. Cabrera, Contributor

Interiors

By Constantino C. Tejero

MELVIN CULABA IS ONE OF OUR young artists whose art leaves an impact no matter that the images he unfolds look similar from exhibit to exhibit. It is precisely the banality of the subjects that fascinates, and they are effectively presented, too.

This artist has chosen to portray the chaos of urban living, particularly in the depressed areas and seedier quarters of the city. Living somewhere in Baclaran, he is seeing it every day.

A Fine Arts graduate from University of Santo Tomas, he went on a fellowship at the Vermont Art Center two years ago. But, of course, he couldn't totally leave his part of the city, because when he returned he again painted it exactly what it was when he left it.

This chaotic world he appropriately renders in frenetic brushstrokes à la Van Gogh, with heaving movements à la Michelangelo and lumps of naked flesh à la Lucian Freud. It is a vision in near monochrome, chiefly a dirty brown, a bilious green, a bitter blue.

Concentrated in imagery but no less panoramic in composition, this world again unfolds before our eyes in Culaba's fourth solo exhibit "Interiorism," 10 pieces in oil on canvas, until June 18 in Blanc at 2E Crown Tower, 107 H.V. de la Costa St., Salcedo Vilage, Makati.

"MAY TENGA"

Gritty views

At about this time last year, the artist mounted in the same venue an exhibit depicting gritty views of the immediate vicinities surrounding his tenement house in Baclaran. Titled "Pagkakaayos," which could mean either "arrangement," "settlement" or "order," it nevertheless pictured a world in total disarray.

One piece depicts the goings-on on the street just outside his apartment, where beasts and humans interact: snarling dogs, demon-masked prostitutes, drug addicts, voyeurs, vendors, beggars, children playing *piko*.

To counterpoise this vision of ugly humanity, there was a poignant portrait of a mother and child in profile seated at the rear of a bus with a sleeping figure on the seat behind them, rendered in a monochrome of bitter green.

"ORASYON Kontra Sunog"

In the present exhibit, the artist's roving eyes have shifted from the streets into the interiors of his house, to lay bare his soul, as it were. We can see that in this metaphoric interiority he has just moved from one chaos to another.

Why, this abode is as disorderly as, if not more so than, the street outside. While there are no heaving bodies here, it is still a topsy-turvy world.

Riotous forms

Amid this chaotic imagery, however, sparkles the artist's essential humanism, manifested in the humorous tone and religious sentiments. Each piece may be seen as still life, architectural detailing, or a kind of self-portrait.

"MGA ALALAHANIN"

(We wonder, though, whether this is really the state the house is in, or the artist has just disarranged it in his mind. We were told that before mounting the exhibit he came to the gallery and measured its walls and floor area so he could make large-scale paintings fit to size and thus give gallery-goers the impression of claustrophobia.)

Each piece displays the artist's subtle colorism, in which the picture plane is drained of all colors until it gives the impression of monochrome (either brown or gray, with tinges of primary and secondary colors). The monochromatic effect somehow unifies the riotous forms.

Culaba has not only a sharp realist eye for detail but also a poetic mind keen with visual tropes. An example is the skinny black dog that appears from piece to piece like a leitmotiv, whatever it symbolizes. It may be an inconsequential detail but its presence adds to that humanism.

Artistic soul

"Ang Deposisyon" is a top view of the entrance to the dwelling, with a rundown sofa hanging on the wall and the dog eating on top of the stairs. Considering the title, this must be Culaba's domestic version of Calvary.

"Orasyon Kontra Sunog" shows a sofa, linoleum-covered flooring, a door opening to another room, and the posterior of the dog urinating at the doorway, which the title humorously refers to as a spell against fire.

"Mga Alalahanin" depicts the artist's studio: curtains, ladder, canvas board and frame, sofa, sticks and boxes, and the dog sleeping on the floor. As hinted by the title, somewhere in this workshop are certain reminders of things to do, but one wonders how anybody could do anything in the jumble.

"May Tenga" has an emaciated youth in the ramshackle sala listening to classical music, in this case Francisco Santiago's "Madaling Araw." This is a portrait of the typical artistic soul, who would go hungry as long as he could buy an album of his favorite music, or book for that matter.

Here the dog is scratching itself. Almost unnoticed is a gray bird perching on a shelf just below a rattan chicken coop hanging on the wall—as funny an image of the sword of Damocles as any.

Dark portrait

Actually this riotous imagery had been prefigured in last year's exhibit, in which one piece depicts a dilapidated sala where a young man is slumped on an antique sofa, over his cup of coffee, while broken-down windows reveal the shanties outside and a piece of golden sky.

There was also a dark portrait of a demon-masked man in a cramped room, a bundle of naked flesh lumped on a lounging chair, presumably trying to get some sleep while polluting the air with cigarette smoke after a hot night of drinking spree.

Another piece shows what is presumably the artist's atelier, a roomful of still lifes in disarray. There's a cabinet topped with a component, books choking shelves, dirty clothes hanging on a chair's back- and armrest, paintings cluttering one wall with a reproduction of "Starry, Starry Night" as centerpiece, and a repro of a Van Gogh self-portrait on the side table.

Every exhibit of Culaba's demonstrates that, like Van Gogh surrounded by insane visions, he has retained his humanity and sensitivity as artist in a world of deadening reality.

Sculptural treasures by Francesco Riccardo Monti

From page D1

tinct character these figures contribute to the special character of a place or building.

Monti worked in an era when sculpture was integrated into architectural design, more often than not to introduce a monumental quality to façades, or even to provide delicate texture to an interior wall.

Today, we still see Monti statues in front of public buildings or plazas. His relief work decorates many exterior and interior walls in unappreciated heritage buildings.

Some of his most dramatic works that remain in practically their original state are the collection atop the Main Building of UST, where he taught sculpture in that Pontifical University's School of Fine Arts for several years.

Monti's collaboration with Arellano established his practice and earned his reputation in this country. As supervising architect to the Bureau of Public Works, Arellano provided Monti opportunities to work in major and important government projects.

Integral to architecture

Monti's work went beyond simply embellishing government buildings in Manila, provincial capitols, city and municipal halls. His sculptures on either the façades or interior walls were a fundamental part of the architectural character of the structures.

"SIAMESE Dancer" on the exterior of the Metropolitan Theater in Manila was cast in concrete in 1931.

Most significant is Monti's contribution to the Metropolitan Theater in Manila, where his sculpture appears in the façade. His freestanding sculptures and friezes are also integral to the interior architecture.

After World War II, the growing art market in Manila was more open to incorporating sculpture in the planning of interior and exterior spaces. His client base expanded to include schools, churches and private commissions.

Showing a keen interest in Philippine culture and history, Monti incorporated related motifs and elements in his design concepts, whether historical or allegorical, best exemplified in the four wooden relief panels installed in the main lobby of the FEU Administration Building.

His style continued to reflect his strong classical grounding. However, in keeping with the times and more "modern" architecture, modernist qualities made their appearance in his work.

His work, although rooted in classicism, was sensitively attuned to the times as seen in the simplified, stylized Art Deco lines that influenced his sculpture as executed in the Metropolitan Theater, Tayabas (now Quezon) provincial capitol, UP Iloilo and FEU.

Some of Monti's public sculptures still stand today. An outstanding pair of figures, of a woman and a carabao, is found in Bacolod City and at the Bureau of Animal Industry in Quezon City.

Much of his public work has either been defaced or simply carted away.

The documentation work by Silvana Diaz and Ma. Victoria Herrera has brought out an unknown Philippine treasure our countrymen should take more notice of.

Feedback is welcome at pride.place@gmail.com

Villalon's book to be launched in Paris

AUGUSTO Villalón, former member of the executive committee of the International Commission on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) and chair of Icomos Philippine Committee, will be launching his book, "Living Landscapes and Cultural Landmarks," published by ArtPost Asia, at the Unesco Salon des Delegués on June 6.

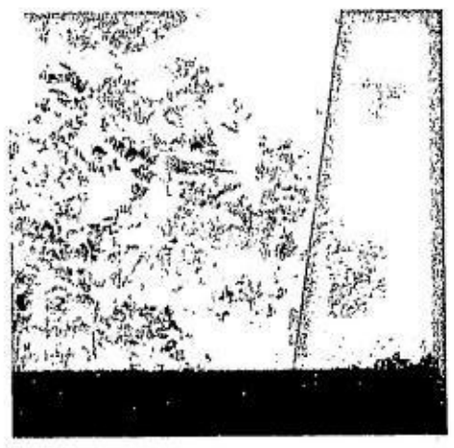
Villalón represented the Philippines in the Unesco World Heritage Committee from 1991-2001. He was responsible for the preparation of all Philippine nomination dossiers to properties inscribed the World Heritage List, including two natural properties, Tubbataha Reef National Park and Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, and cultural properties such as the Baroque Churches of the Philippines and Historic City of Vigan, and mixed property, the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras.

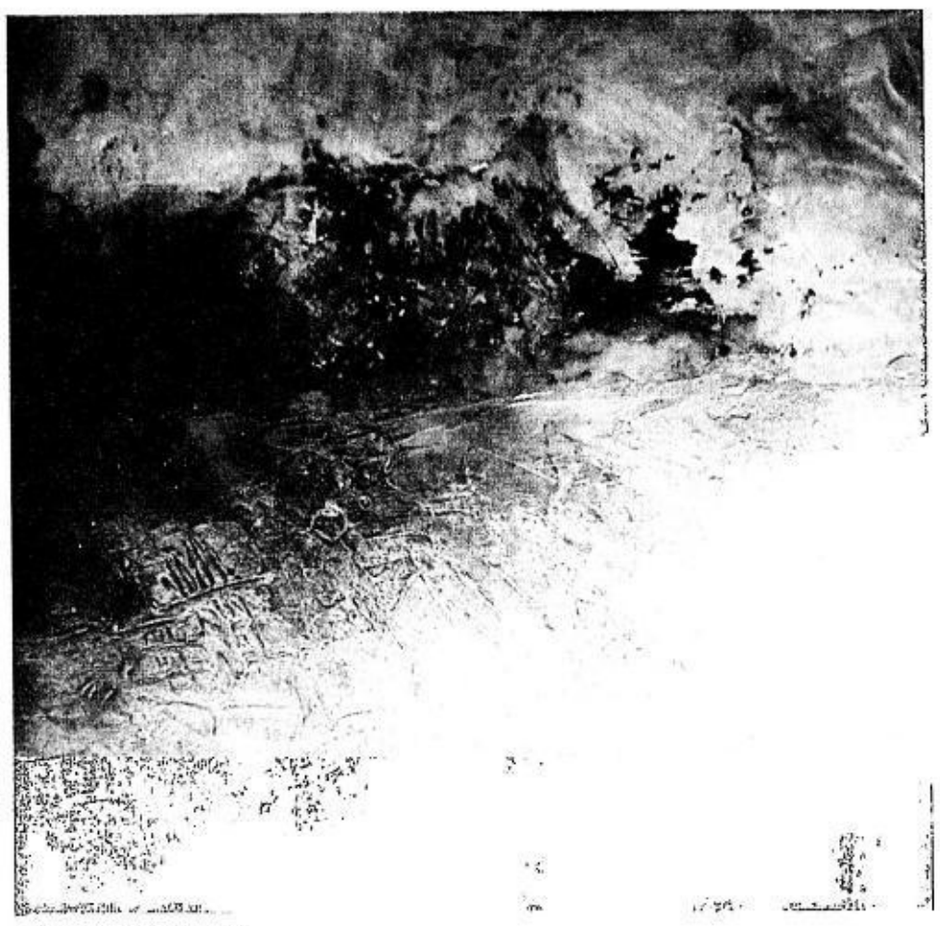
"CROSSROAD"

"FORMS in Space" II

"RED Earth"

"THE FIRE"


"FORMS in Space" I


"BETWEEN Spaces"

In this his latest foray at experimentation, Piedra's aesthetic markedly evolves as his canvas expands to include metal surfaces. What emerges is a compelling series of images born of fire and metal

"MIST"

RAUL PIEDRA

Adventures in texture

By Johnathan Libarios Rondina
Contributor

FOR ANYONE, A SUDDEN, UNEXPECTED brush with mortality can be a harrowing yet spiritual experience. For artist Raul Piedra, that experience came in the wake of a particularly frenzied period late last year.

A one-man show was underway and a commissioned mural was due, leaving him exhausted and, quite literally, breathless. What he stubbornly dismissed as asthma turned out to be a stress-induced coronary thrombosis that put him in intensive care for one week.

It might have been a mild heart attack, but its impact was no less profound for Piedra, who took the experience as an invitation for serious and continuing introspection.

Richly textured life

What Piedra is likely to find in his soul-searching is a life as boldly hued and as richly textured as his paintings.

Born in 1951 in San Fernando, Pampanga, and raised in Tondo, Manila, he found his artistic calling after winning a school art competition. He later pursued art studies at Philippine Women's University.

Those long, dark days of martial law saw Piedra retreating to Pampanga, where he spent his early years as a struggling artist. Like many of his contemporaries, Piedra sold commercial folk art, drawings of fish on paper that was food on the table for his growing family.

In 1984, he received a grant from the Victoria Art Council of Melbourne, a career-changing opportunity which allowed him to work in Australia and New Zealand, where, faced with cutthroat competition, he learned to strengthen his artistic resolve.

This determination earned him a good reputation in New Zealand, where, despite being a foreigner, he was nominated as one the country's most notable emerging artists.

Today, Piedra, 56, is an esteemed artist best known for his textured abstraction in mixed media. His works, a favorite among interior designers and architects, now welcome guests in posh hotels in the Philippines and abroad, and adorn the walls of popular establishments and industrial spaces as well as those in the homes of serious art collectors.

While his last exhibit, "Gentle Winds," at The Room Upstairs Gallery, staged post-confinement, showcased a subdued, contemplative Piedra, in "Earthbound," his latest one-man show at Serendra's Galerie E in Fort Bonifacio, the artist aims to mark yet another career milestone by presenting a series of 14 paintings done in his signature textured style combined with promising new experimentations in mixed media.

Earth's dynamic

The earth and its myriad surfaces and landscapes have long fascinated Piedra, whose family name literally means "rock." Thus, he defines his many travels in and outside of the Philippines as "adventures in texture," study explorations that allow him to investigate nuances in the look, feel, and composition of different terrains, including rock formations and arrangements, mud consistency in rice paddies, soil quality in different altitudes, and sand coarseness in different beaches.

He then mimics these topographic variances in his canvases by using a unique mixture of paint and industrial materials. Acrylic, Piedra's

ADVENTURES/ D4

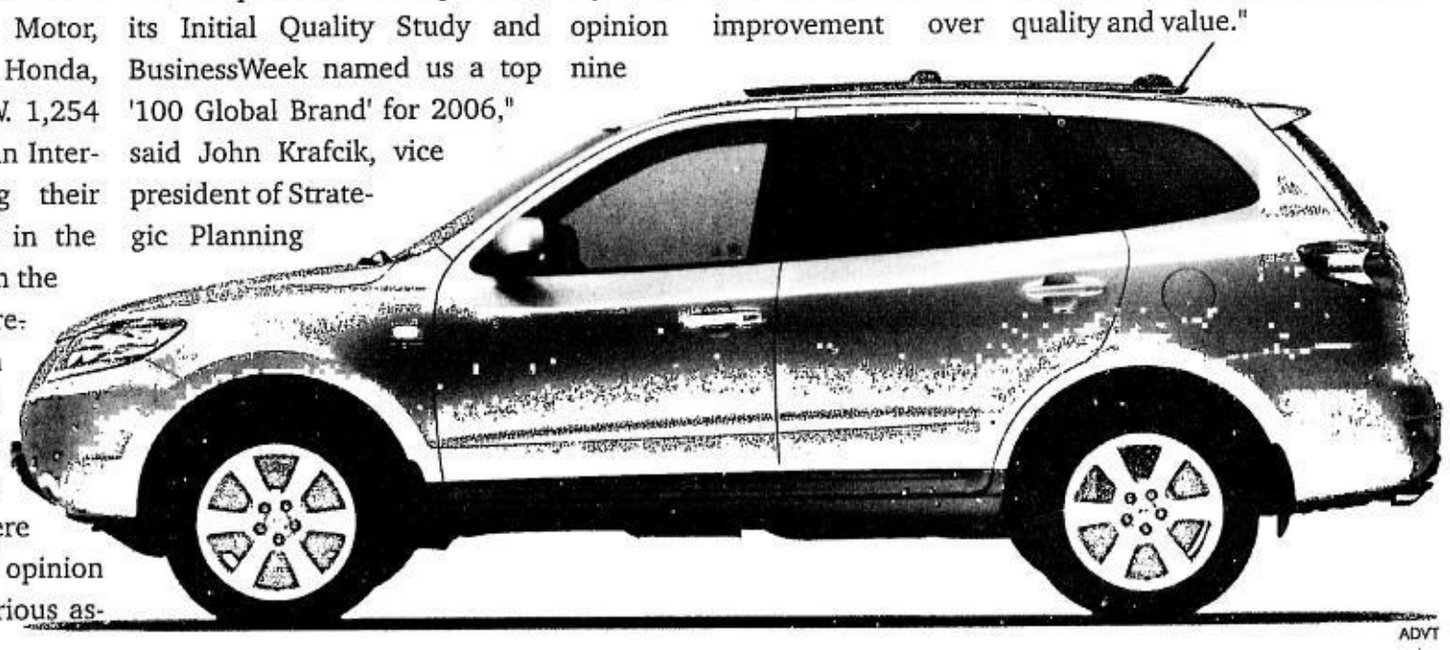
Hyundai Earns Largest Opinion Improvement

AutoPacific, an automotive consulting firm, reported Hyundai had the largest opinion improvement among nine manufacturers in its initial wave of Image and Consideration Tracking Research.

AutoPacific analysts stated, "The surprise (or not so surprising) winner of the most improved manufacturer was Hyundai Motor Corporation. Comments surrounding the performance of Hyundai gave Hyundai credit for substantially improved styling, newly-found high durability/quality/reliability, a strong value message and a great warranty program. Positive comments outweighed negative comments by about four to one."

Nine manufacturers were evaluated including, General Motors, Toyota, Ford Motor, Chrysler Group, Nissan, Honda, Hyundai, VW, and BMW. 1,254 panelists responded to an Internet survey concerning their opinion of automakers in the USA. The key question in the survey was whether the respondent's opinion of a manufacturer had changed since this time last year. Over 5,000 verbatim comments were collected in relation to opinion and attitude toward various aspects of a manufacturer's image.

"In 2006, JD Power and Associates ranked Hyundai as the highest non-premium nameplate in its Initial Quality Study and BusinessWeek named us a top '100 Global Brand' for 2006," said John Krafcik, vice president of Strategic Planning and Product Development, Hyundai Motor America. "AutoPacific's report that Hyundai now has the largest opinion improvement over nine competing manufacturers is another example of how Hyundai is continuing to improve brand image through its commitment to quality and value."



ADVT

Diverse views on limited canvas

"THE LONG Wait," by Parker Encisa

"STREETS of Fire," by Alvin Villaruel

"ANO sa Tingin N'yo," by Anton Balao

THE EXHIBIT "3x4" IS ON view until June 9 in 1/of Gallery, 2/L, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City. It features the works of Anton Balao, Parker Encisa, Rex Tatlonghari and Alvin Villaruel.

With nothing in common but 36"x48" canvases, the artists treat viewers to highly eye-catching diversity.

Art enthusiasts will certainly be drawn to the Villaruel piece that is quiet yet verbose in its luminosity; Balao's work marked by intense colors and textured strokes that evoke virtuosity; Encisa's character in a dreamlike and dreaming state; and Tatlonghari's merging of the organic with the synthetic.

Call 9013152.

"NEXUS (Stitch of Mind)," by Rex Tatlonghari

Environment in environmental art

By Sid Gomez Hildawa
Contributor

FOR A MONTH NOW, THE FRONT lawn of the Cultural Center of the Philippines along Roxas Boulevard has been the venue for an environmental art piece, "Angud: A Forest Once," by Los Baños Laguna-based artist Junyee.

This unusual art project was launched during Earth Day on April 22, with ceremonies that involved dancers and actors performing within and around the work.

The adjective environmental bears closer examination here, as it operates in various levels and could serve as key toward a deeper appreciation of this public art project: art from, about and as environment.

Art from the environment

First, this artwork sprawling across one hectare of open land consists of some 10,000 *angud* pieces collected from the provinces of Aurora and Quezon.

As it turns out, illegal logging in our country is carried out not only by large-scale logging concessionaires but, more disturbingly, also by individual residents in dire need of day-to-day subsistence. Compared to log-bearing trucks that are easy to spot and apprehend, individual pieces can easily be spirited away like fine sand filtering through a sieve.

After a tree is felled, a hole is bored at one of its ends so that the lumber may be pulled with a rope (usually by carabao) out of the forest into a clearing. This end part with the hole, called *angud*, is then sawn off and discarded for charcoal. Junyee's artistic intervention involves the rescuing of these *angud* pieces by utilizing them as materials for art.

Art about the environment

Aside from sourcing its materials from the environment, "Angud" is also about the environment, particularly about our personal accountability in the continuing denudation of forests. From a distance, the installation piece can look like a graveyard, and the subtitle, "A Forest Once," confirms this perception.

Looking closely, one will notice that the individual pieces are connected to one another by red nylon ropes, perhaps alluding to the way the logs were pulled out of the forest, but more importantly suggesting diverse elements in an ecosystem are interconnected like a complex web.

By directing our attention to the plight of our forests, "Angud" is able to repay Mother Nature for providing the raw materials for this art project.

'Angud' offers a particular experience of outdoor space much more than a two-dimensional painting or even a three-dimensional sculpture could

SCULPTOR Junyee's installation is sprawled across a hectare of the CCP Complex and consists of 10,000 pieces of *angud*, the tip of felled trees logged from Aurora and Quezon

Art as environment

Finally, "Angud" is also an environment in itself, that is, it offers a particular experience of outdoor space much more than a two-dimensional painting or even a three-dimensional sculpture could. Instead of merely being located in some place, the sheer magnitude of the work asserts itself as a location and a place.

The CCP front lawn, which used to be a void taken for granted by daily commuters and passers-by, has been transformed into a "presence," something that cannot be ignored as it heightens the drama of traversing the busy intersection of Roxas Boulevard and P. Ocampo Street (formerly Vito Cruz).

If in previous instances visitors would have their picture taken with the CCP main building as backdrop, this time they could have "Angud" as the site of their pictorials. The resulting photographs and countless other images taken by many others become the documentation wherein this ephemeral art piece would continue to exist, that is, in the environment of memory and imagination.

"Angud" will be dismantled beginning June 5. This project was made possible with the support of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Metrobank Foundation, and artist-friends Ramon Orlina and Fil dela Cruz. Collaborating artists include Hermisanto and Gerry Inco.

THE EARLY STAGES OF PARENTING:

It's all about Stimulation

When it comes to parenting, providing the very best for your child is of the foremost concern. But these days, it doesn't simply mean pulling out all the stops in choosing the right schools. Now, proper parenting goes hand-in-hand with providing your child the right stimuli for proper brain development.

Research shows that using music, play or nutrition can help enhance the developing mind during your child's earliest stages. But by combining the three, you can make sure you are giving your child a complete system that will strengthen the foundation for his brain development. And there's no better time to start than at the beginning.

THE PRENATAL MIND
Communication with your baby is possible the moment you learn of your pregnancy. In fact, studies show that listening to classical music can help stimulate a child's brain development as early as the prenatal stage. Complex classical music, particularly when listened to during your third trimester of pregnancy, has been found to help develop areas in the baby's brain necessary for math and spatial reasoning.

Prenatal play is another form of stimulation that also helps foster a stronger bond between you and your child. Talking to him, stroking him through the belly and exposing him to light and vibrations are not only pleasurable for him, they also open him up to stimuli early on that will develop more brain connections and pathways to the world outside the womb.

In this stage, it is also important for moms to have proper nutrition, which includes a diet rich in brain-building nutrients DHA and Choline.

THE BRAIN IN ITS INFANCY
Several areas of the brain are used to process music. Some of these areas are also responsible for processing learning, memory and language. Before your child reaches his twelfth month, he responds to sounds and melodies better and does not fully comprehend speech yet. As he ages, however, he will begin to understand music the same way he will understand speech—by listening to others around him, and opening his own mouth to practice making sounds.

When your child's vision begins to develop, he should be exposed to contrasting colors such as red, black and white, which help stimulate his visual development. These colors can be introduced to him through age-appropriate toys that are soft and safe to play with.

Children at this age should also be given proper nutrition. At birth, a child's brain is 25% its approximate adulthood weight, so he needs to be given a diet rich in brain-building nutrients such as DHA and ARA at clinically proven levels, and Choline at Institute of Medicine (IOM) levels, which can be found in breastmilk.

TODDLING TOWARDS PRESCHOOL
When your child is old enough to recognize words and their meanings, it would be a good time to listen to nursery rhymes with him. Singing along reinforces his language development. At the same time, the rhythmic pattern may help your child learn a number of other skills, such as sequencing or cause-and-effect relationships. Long-term benefits in this case include higher scores on tests such as math, increased efficiency in the communication between the two brain hemispheres, better reading scores and enhanced listening skills.

When your child reaches an age where he can easily move around on his own, you'll see that he plays more. And the good news is that play is actually his way of learning. By engaging in games like Do You See What I See?, which reinforce his language development, vocabulary-building and problem-solving skills, or creative crafts such as origami-making, his mind is further developed and he is able to think for himself and express himself in his own way.

And naturally, it is key to continuously provide your child with the essential nutrients, DHA, ARA and Choline, to help support his brain development.

Parenting might just be the most difficult job on earth, but if you properly stimulate your child through music, play and nutrition, you will have the right system at hand to help ensure that you are helping your child's brain development. After all, observing your own child develop in leaps and bounds during these early years will be worth the experience.

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ADVT

Adventures in texture

From page D3

favorite medium, is itself a strong adhesive. Mixing this with sand reinforced with decortex and marble paste, Piedra creates tactile protrusions on his canvases that echo the earth's dynamic, often unpredictable, sometimes violent temperament.

This technique is apparent in the show's signature piece "Earthbound" (36"x48") and in "Red Earth" (36"x36"), both reminiscent of the artist's 2002 "Gabon" series, shown in Megamall's Gallery Nine, which paid homage to Pampanga's *lahar*-ravaged terrain.

In Renaissance Europe, artists were practically regarded as illusionists whose worth was determined by their abilities to conjure "magical" surfaces on a flat canvas. Piedra's canvases, seen in this context, are visually engaging sleight-of-hand enchantments.

The signature piece when juxtaposed against "Wave" (48"x60"), the other large work in this series, is a study in contrasts and manifests Piedra's wide compositional range.

The first, vibrant in its green, yellow-orange hues, spattered with coarse, globular formations, is forceful, almost impatient but for its symmetric proportions. The second, in cobalt-blue and aquamarine, is etched with studied temperance; it evokes calmness, appearing like an exotic tapestry, or like the tranquil earth viewed from space.

Playing with fire

More significantly, however, "Earthbound" may be seen as the unavoidable consequence of Piedra's current introspective mood. Here his aesthetic markedly evolves as his canvas expands to include metal surfaces. What emerges is a compelling series of images born of fire and metal.

"Crossroad" (24"x24"), an allusion to the artist's emerging transition, combines three of his distinct techniques at texture-building, where the larger portion is appropriated for stainless aluminum.

These "stainless canvases" are textured by blowtorching different chemicals and paint onto the sheets and glazing them with varnish. To achieve this effect, Piedra spends countless hours studying how different materials burn and how fire crawls on metal.

Lines serve several purposes in Piedra's works. Semiotically, as in "Forms in Space" 1-2 (diptych, 24"x24"), they connote a sense of equilibrium, geometric delineations that are a necessary ingredient in the artist's exposition of the organic.

But in this initial exploration into terra incognita, these dividing lines also identify technical boundaries between the natural and the synthetic, and what appears to be the looming convergence of both as shown in "Mist" (30"x40"), a haunting minimalist composition halved by distinct canvases divided and connected by a thin red line.

These lines finally dissolve, almost completely, in "Between Spaces" (24"x24"), perhaps signaling what has yet to come.

"Every artist," he says, "must make a commitment to blaze trails."

Mortality, although inevitable, is after all tempered by evolution. In "Earthbound," Raul Piedra, artist almost interrupted, makes a profound commitment to his unfinished textured life and art.

"Earthbound: New Works by Raul Piedra" runs June 4-24 in Galerie E, 2/F, Serendra Shops, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Call 9153840.

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MARICRIS GARCIA, PPS grand champ 2007, is a Zsazsa lookalike, says host Regine

Pop goes the superstar

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Rodel Rotoni

FIRST, THERE WAS PETITE belter Jonalyn Viray. Then there was fisherman's son Gerald Santos.

On its third year, the GMA 7 talent search "Pinoy Pop Superstar" produced Tourism student Maricris Garcia as champion, besting eight other finalists at the grand showdown held at the Araneta Coliseum on Saturday.

The top four contestants chosen by judges and text voters were Garcia, Joyce Tañaña, Miguel Naranjilla and Bryan Termulo. From these semi-finalists, the list was further trimmed down to two: lounge chanteuse Garcia and Bulakeño balladeer Termulo.

The show's regular judges Jaya, Danny Tan and Floy Quintos were joined by talent manager Ronnie Henares and network executive Wilma Galvante on finals night.

YEAR One winner Jonalyn Viray, the petite belter

Galvante told INQUIRER Entertainment that the judges had a "difficult time this year because all of the finalists had great voices and stage presence, and were good-looking." She said Garcia stood out, however, because "she has very good voice quality and is telegenic, too."

The champ's winning songs were "Beautiful Disaster," "As If We Never Said Goodbye" and "One Voice."

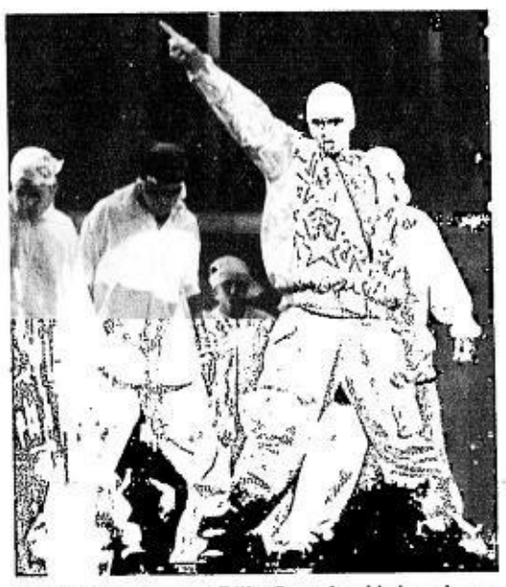
Garcia confessed to the INQUIRER that she didn't study "One Voice" enough: "We were all asked to memorize it, but I didn't take it seriously because I wasn't expecting to land in the Top Two."

She was on pins and needles during the showdown. "The song was one key lower than my usual," she explained.

Termulo, on the other hand, thought Garcia had it in the bag from the start, though he was the clear crowd favorite at the Big Dome.

Not a few observers have pointed out that 19-year-old Garcia, who has been singing in hotels for the past four years, resembles Zsazsa Padilla. "In the first week of competition, [host] Regine [Velasquez] called me Zsazsa," Garcia recalled. "It's very flattering."

HOST Regine Velasquez is a contest alumna, too.



GUEST performer Billy Crawford is hosting a new dance show.

FINALISTS, from L, Jae Buensuceso, April de los Santos, Bryan, Marvin Gagarin and Miguel Naranjilla crowd Maricris.

Part of Garcia's winnings are P1 million in cash, a P1.5 million house and lot, plus managing and recording contracts with GMA 7.

Right after the finale show, runner-up Termulo was unsure if he would also win a contract with the network.

Galvante, however, told the INQUIRER: "Bryan is very *simpatico* and confident onstage. Both Maricris and Bryan will get network contracts *na*."

Garcia said she was different from other champs because she didn't "make *birit*" (belt) all the time. "I want to prove that singing prowess is not measured by the high notes you can hit, that it's about voice quality and a distinct style. I want to be known as a singer who can do both standards and modern songs," she said.

Garcia joined the contest in its first year, but failed to make the grade then. "I guess now is the right time for me," she said.

Special awards were given to Naranjilla, the texters' choice, and Jennie Escalada, best in album performance.

The Araneta show featured homegrown international performer Billy Crawford, who is set to host the new GMA 7 dance competition "Move."

The big question, however, is: Will the three-year-old program finally produce a singer worthy of the "Pinoy Pop Superstar" title, one who will follow in the footsteps of "Tawag ng Tanghalan" champ Nora Aunor or "Bagong Kampeon" winner Velasquez?

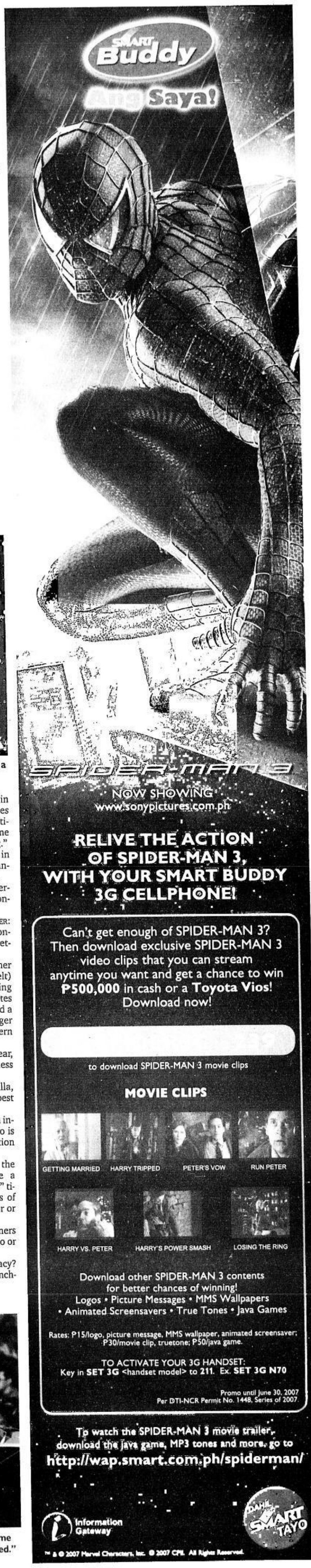
Thus far, the contest's past two winners can't even come close to a Sarah Geronimo or an Erik Santos.

Will Garcia live up to the Superstar legacy? Is she prepared for the big time? Her unflinching reply: "I'm ready!"

BRYAN kisses a stunned Maricris.

TOP TWO Maricris and Bryan wave to fans

JUDGES, from L, Ronnie Henares, Wilma Galvante and Floy Quintos, had a hard time choosing this year's winner "because all the finalists were good-looking and talented."



GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ATHEISM, THE THINKING MAN'S RELIGION
(Mpffff!...)

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

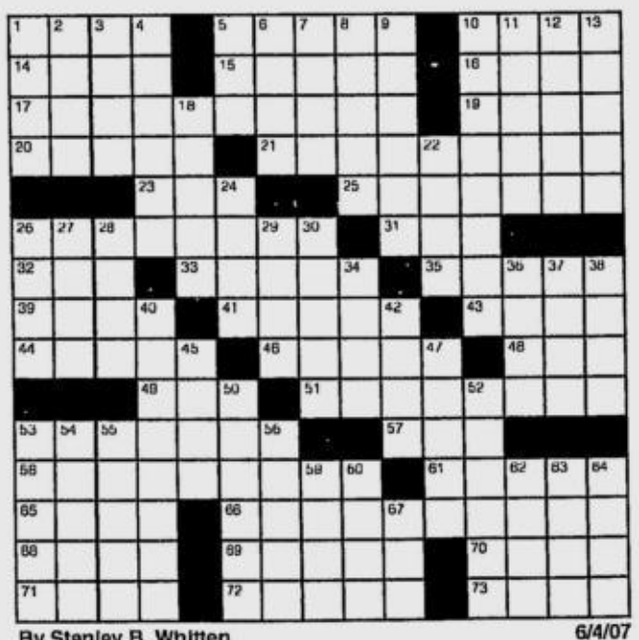
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Title
5 Thin cookie
10 Elegantly stylish
14 Greek god of war
15 Breathing
16 Leftover meal
17 Lewis & Clark discovery
19 Otherwise
20 Sturdy fabric
21 Dark and gloomy
23 Halfway, briefly
25 Rockpiles at bases of cliffs
26 Sports drink
31 Cotillion gal
32 "Roses __ red..."
33 Bucks
35 Barolo and merlot
39 Split apart
41 Derived from gold
43 Young horse
44 Crystal set
46 Charming miss
48 Bridge expert Culbertson
49 12th graders
51 Butter-and-eggs
53 Pageboys, beehives, etc.
57 Pair
58 Makes known
61 PC info-keeper
65 Snooty avoidance
66 Pigeon's relative
68 Ripped up
69 Pond scum
70 Fencing sword
71 Potato buds
72 Geography class prop
73 Tenant's expense

DOWN
1 NYSE competition
2 British composer Thomas
3 Nasty
4 __ Pie (frozen treat)
5 Armed conflict
6 Landed
7 V
8 Happening
9 Scan again
10 Like an angel
11 Angelic rings
12 Disputed subject
13 Bobby Fischer's forte
18 Arabian princes
22 Gusted
24 Computer input
26 Teri of "Tootsie"
27 Location
28 Take care of
29 Dilettante's painting
30 White heron
34 Farm building
36 Christmas carol
37 First lady of scat
38 Hades river
40 Sheds duds
42 Dressed
45 Black Sea port
47 Bring out
50 "Against Interpretation" author
52 Livestock feed
53 Undue speed
54 Bother
55 Habituate
56 Stern oar
59 Therefore
60 Sharp pain
62 Jump or tight follower
63 Kitchen appliance
64 Encounter
67 First Shaker



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
6/4/07

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	C	H	I	E	V	E		A	P	A	C	H	E	S
C	H	E	A	P	I	E		P	A	L	E	A	L	E
C	O	W	L	I	N	G		O	C	E	A	N	I	A
U	R	L		C	O	S		T	E	X		D	S	T
S	T	E	L	E	S		C	H	R	I	S	S	I	E
E	L	T	O	N		D	D	E		S	P	O	O	R
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				S	E	L		S	O	C				
A	L	A	S		T	I	M	E	S	A	V	E	R	S
D	E	N	C	H		N	U	S		M	A	N	E	T
D	I	T	H	E	R	E	D		C	E	R	I	S	E
I	S	H		L	O	A		A	L	L		G	T	E
C	U	R	T	E	S	T		P	A	L	O	M	A	R
T	R	A	I	N	E	E		E	M	I	R	A	T	E
S	E	X	L	E	S	S		S	P	A	R	S	E	R

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HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have excellent verbal skills; plus you're highly intuitive. This is why you are inspirational when you talk to others. Your freedom is important; you need to remain flexible. Many of you also have technical skills. You adore learning new things. Always trust your hunches and your desire to excel. The year ahead will be full of exciting new beginnings for you!
Birthdate of: Angelina Jolie, actress; Noah Wyle, actor; Rachel Griffiths, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): What a wonderful way to start your week! You're full of energy. You feel positive and alive. You have the confidence to do anything. Go after whatever you want.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might be on a secret mission today. You're doing something privately, and you feel very good about it. In fact, you feel all-powerful. Trust your hunches!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a marvelous day to enter into any kind of group activity. Physical sports will be fun and active. Your connections with others will be positive, upbeat and enthusiastic.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your ambition is aroused today. You're definitely on the right track. Don't be afraid of pushing your own agenda, especially with bosses, VIPs, parents and teachers.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a marvelous day to make travel plans or do anything connected with publishing, the media, medicine or the law. Sign up for a course. Go back to school.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You feel passionate about life today! This is a good time to decide how to share things or divide shared property. Gifts, goodies, inheritances and favors will come your way.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Relations with partners and good friends are very warm and enthusiastic today. People want to see you; you want to see them. Enjoy your day!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You can get a tremendous amount of work done today. You feel enthusiastic about whatever you're doing. But more than that, you feel powerful and confident.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a wonderful day to flirt, play, pursue the arts, be active in sports and just have fun. Accept all invitations. Get out there and enjoy yourself!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): All your family dynamics and happenings on the home front are very positive today. You can get a lot done. Roll up your sleeves and dig in.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your powers of persuasion are tremendous today. You can persuade anyone to do anything. This is excellent for teachers, sales representatives, marketing experts and anyone who wants to communicate something.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): What a marvelous day to make money! You might also be spending a lot as well. By all means, trust your moneymaking ideas. You can boost your income.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

1	5	9					7	
6			3		9			1
3			1	5		8		
	6	4					8	
		1		2		4		
	8					1	9	
		6		3	7			4
4			9		2			8
	3					6	2	5

Difficulty Level ★ 6/04

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	4	3	8	5	7	6	9	1
1	7	9	3	6	4	2	5	8
8	6	5	1	9	2	3	7	4
5	1	4	2	7	3	9	8	6
6	2	8	9	1	5	7	4	3
3	9	7	6	4	8	1	2	5
4	8	1	7	3	9	5	6	2
9	5	6	4	2	1	8	3	7
7	3	2	5	8	6	4	1	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Paula Abdul upset about weepy phone call leaked to media

PAULA ABDUL

NEW YORK—A LEAKED AUDIO tape in which Paula Abdul can be heard sobbing and bad-mouthing a former spokesman has made its way to the Internet.

In what appears to be a recent conference call with a group of publicists, the "American Idol" judge rails against Howard Bragman and discusses her various health problems.

The conversation, first reported Thursday by the New York Post's Page Six, has Abdul saying she'd "been going through tremendous amounts of a difficult time" and had "never been treated this way."

Abdul claims Bragman "did some disgusting behavior" by failing to accompany her when she appeared on ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" last month.

Abdul, 44, also says Bragman told her she was "too old" to appear on the cover of OK! magazine, which has an interview with her in its latest issue.

The lack of respect, she says, "is too much to stomach."

Bragman told The Associated Press on Friday that he had not discouraged Abdul from shooting the cover because of her age.

He also confirmed a story posted Thursday on celebrity Web site TMZ.com that said Abdul had told him not to attend the Kimmel taping, then later had an assistant call and ask him where he was.

Her own show

In a statement posted Thursday on TMZ, the singer-dancer said she was "deeply hurt and extremely disappointed" that the call went public.

"This is not only illegal but also highly unethical," Abdul said. "While I don't feel a need to justify or explain my conversation, even as a public figure I do feel my privacy has been violated."

Her reality show, "Hey Paula," premieres June 28 on Bravo. It follows Abdul as she films a new season of Fox network's "American Idol" and develops her own perfume and cosmetics line. The show also promises to show how her lack of sleep makes her loopy. *AP*

Cinema One nets 5 entries

From page E4

as a carpenter in a haunted mansion. Ilarde also created the critically acclaimed "Sa Ilalim ng Cogon" among other films.

The drama "Tambolista" is by Adolf Alix Jr., who describes his new film as "an intimate portrait of two brothers struggling with deprivation." Alix wrote and directed the prize-winning film "Donsol."

Each film received a P1-million "production grant" from Creative Programs, Inc., which operates and distributes Cinema One, ABS-CBN's Filipino movie cable channel.

The third annual Cinema One film fest is tentatively set on the last week of September. Cash prizes will be handed to the winners of the Best Picture (chosen by a jury) and Best Digital Movie (viewer's choice) awards.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 MR. BEAN MTRCB GP 12:40, 3:00 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 (GP) 12:00, 3:20, 6:40, 10:00
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN MTRCB PG-13 1:15, 3:45, 6:15, 8:45
4 SHREK 3 (GP) 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30 PIRATES 3 (GP) 8:30
PREMIERE THEATRE ZODIAC (R-13) 12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00

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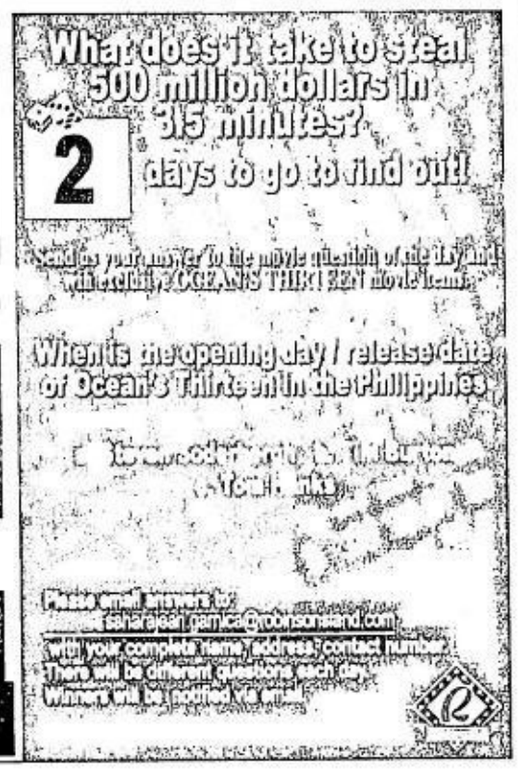
PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 11:00,2:20,5:40,9:00	MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY G 11:05,1:15,3:25,5:35, 7:45,10:00	ZODIAC R13 1:00,4:10,7:20,10:30
PAANO KITA IIBIGIN PG13 12:30,2:55,5:20, 7:45,10:10	SHREK 3 G 12:10,2:15,4:20, 6:25,8:30	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3 G 12:00,3:20,6:40,10:00

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE



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PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 10:00 PG-13	
ZODIAC 1:50, 5:00, 8:10, 11:10 R-13	
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3 12:40, 4:10, 7:50, 11:30 G	
MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00 G	

gloriettа GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

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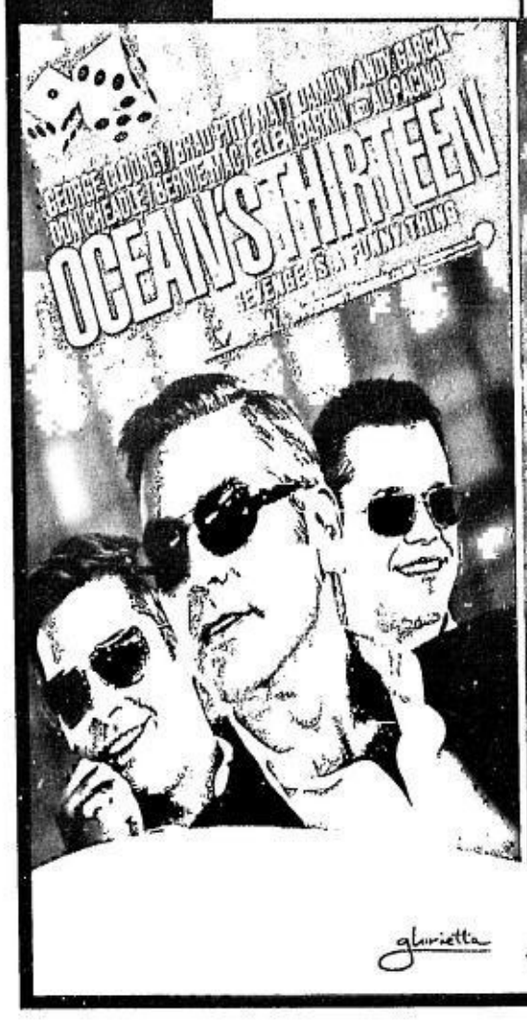
THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	3 ZODIAC	4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	3 THX PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 SPIDER-MAN 3	5 SHREK 3	6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY	7 ZODIAC
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 SHREK 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS	5 ZODIAC GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END GUARANTEED SEATS	2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY		
	3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	5 ZODIAC	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY	2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	4 SHREK 3
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN	2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY		
	3 SHREK 3	4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END	5 ZODIAC	



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Ai-Ai's goal: Give Beyonce a run for her money

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

AI-AI DE LAS ALAS HAS EVERY REASON TO be proud of her traffic-stopping Belo billboard on Edsa. "*Itsura ni* **Beyonce**," she beams.

Seeing how sexy Ai-Ai has become after undergoing Smart Lipo, I'm tempted to try it myself. Belo makes life bloom at 40!

Ai has also made a smart choice concerning her love life. "Allergic *na ko sa bagets! Panay sila* take. *Kakapagod ng mag* give *ng* give!" she says, laughing.

Ai is a born giver. Even during her struggling years, she always could be counted on.

Future bride

Luis Manzano is the new endorser of Kremil-S. It comes in handy to cure the hyperacidity he gets because of his erratic schedule. He also has found the antidote for heartaches. In his multiply.com account, his pic with **Anne Curtis** is labeled "me and my future bride."

I teased him about it. He smiled, saying, "Anne and I [agreed] that if we are still single in a couple of years and we don't have special people in our lives, we will get married."

Will **Sam Milby** prove to be a hitch in the couple's dream to get hitched someday?

On or off?

Rufa Mae Quinto shrugs off rumors that she and **Erik Santos** have cooled off. "For me it's black or white. On or off. I don't go for cool off. Erik and I are celebrating our first anniversary on June 13. He's on tour so *di kami nagkikita. Tampuhan min-san kami* due to lack of time but no major fights."

Never enough time, always enough love.

Break time

Lea Salonga's *unica hija* **Nicole** turned 1 last May 16 in New York. The proud mama reports, "We had a nice Chinese meal at Ruby Foo's, then a Ben & Jerry ice cream cake for dessert. It was a rainy day but we all enjoyed."

This world-class talent and super mom knows when to have fun and when to take things seriously. Lea's blog entry below ought to be a wake-up call to celebs with illusions of grandeur…

Perception

"Show business can be a business of perception. It's kinda like saying to the world that you are an 8-incher when in fact, you're only a 6.

"It's magic, with plenty of smoke and mirrors. It's airbrushed photos, stylists, make-up artists and hairdressers. It's a lot of things that have nothing to do with talent, drive, determination, ambition, basic good looks and perseverance.

"Sounds discouraging, doesn't it? It doesn't have to be. I'm one of the old fogies who feel that at the core of it all, under the smoke and great lighting, one's talent, drive and ambition win over everything. It's what determines an artist's longevity.

"It's frustrating when I find that the more talented folks don't get as many breaks as those who have a fraction of their gifts. It's cruel and unfair. However, I have faith in audiences ... that ultimately, they pick those who are deserving of the attention and accolade."

Teen show

ABS-CBN's teen-oriented show "Abt Ur Luv (Ur Lyf 2)" now airs every Saturday after "Nagmamahal Kapamilya." **Victor Basa** and **Carla Humphries** are being groomed in the series as the next love team to swoon over. Carla dispels rumors that Victor is gay. "Maybe some girls and gays are just frustrated that they can't have Victor that's why they resort to spreading lies."

Victor ought to feel victorious with the way Carla comes to his defense.

NICOLE on her first birthday in New York, with famous mom Lea Salonga

Sam turns 23

Sam Milby has just turned 23 and he can only be thankful, despite the nasty publicity that comes with fame. "I know I cannot please everyone. But why should I dwell on the negative when there is so much to be grateful for?"

There's really "SAM" thing about him!

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

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Smitten by beauty queen

By Armin Adina

JUST OUT OF A SUPPOSED ROmance with "Pinoy Dream Academy" scholar Irish Fullerton that ended in futility, singer Mark Bautista is now quietly pursuing a new girl.

At a press conference for a clothing line he is endorsing, the 25-year-old crooner told INQUIRER Entertainment he is smitten by Riza Santos, Canada's representative to the 2006 Miss Earth pageant and recipient of the contest's Miss Photogenic award.

During the launch of his campaign for Le Froge at Club O in Quezon City on Thursday, Mark admitted it was not exactly a case of love at first sight. But, he said, he was immediately attracted to the Filipino-Canadian when he first saw her on television during the Miss Earth pageant held here last November. He did not get to see the girl in person at that time.

But when Mark held a concert with fellow "Star for a Night" alumnus Sarah Geronimo in Canada shortly after, he finally met Riza and instantly decided he should get to know her better.

"I asked around for her contact numbers, and then called her," Mark recounted. And when he learned that Riza was planning to spend summer in the Philippines, he told the 20-year-old television reporter to look him up when she got here.

MISS Earth-Canada Riza Santos

Last month, Riza arrived in Manila with her family. But when she got in touch with Mark, she asked about his rumored relationship with Irish. She had apparently learned about it from reports posted in his website www.markbautista.com.

After Mark explained to her that he and the Filipino-American singer never had a thing going and that, in fact, they were "just friends," Riza agreed to go out with him.

"Riza likes going to malls, so I took her to Glorietta, to the Fort, had dinner in a Japanese restaurant..." Mark said. Both being Christians, they also went to the Victory Christian Church together.

Mark has met Riza's Filipino parents and has likewise introduced Riza to his. "My parents like her, and I think Riza's folks like me, too," he added.

And despite minor problems in communication—Riza does not speak Filipino and Mark is not that good in English—Mark said, "We're both happy when we're together." But he quickly clarified, "There's no commitment yet, it's too early for that."

Riza has gone back home to Canada, but not before promising Mark she will return in July.

MARK BAUTISTA

"She will stay for a year and try to find a career in media," Mark revealed. "If she likes it here, she may stay longer."

While Mark waits for July, he will be busy with a European concert tour with Sarah this month.

And when Riza finally comes back, Mark will surprise her with his very first billboard along Edsa that features both his fashion endorsement and his third studio album, "Every Now and Then" under Viva Records.

"Having a billboard is something big for any artist. I never thought my career would come to this point," he said. And of course he wanted to share that with Riza.

FLASH REPORT: WILL BE AVAILABLE IN SELECTED SM THEATERS!!!
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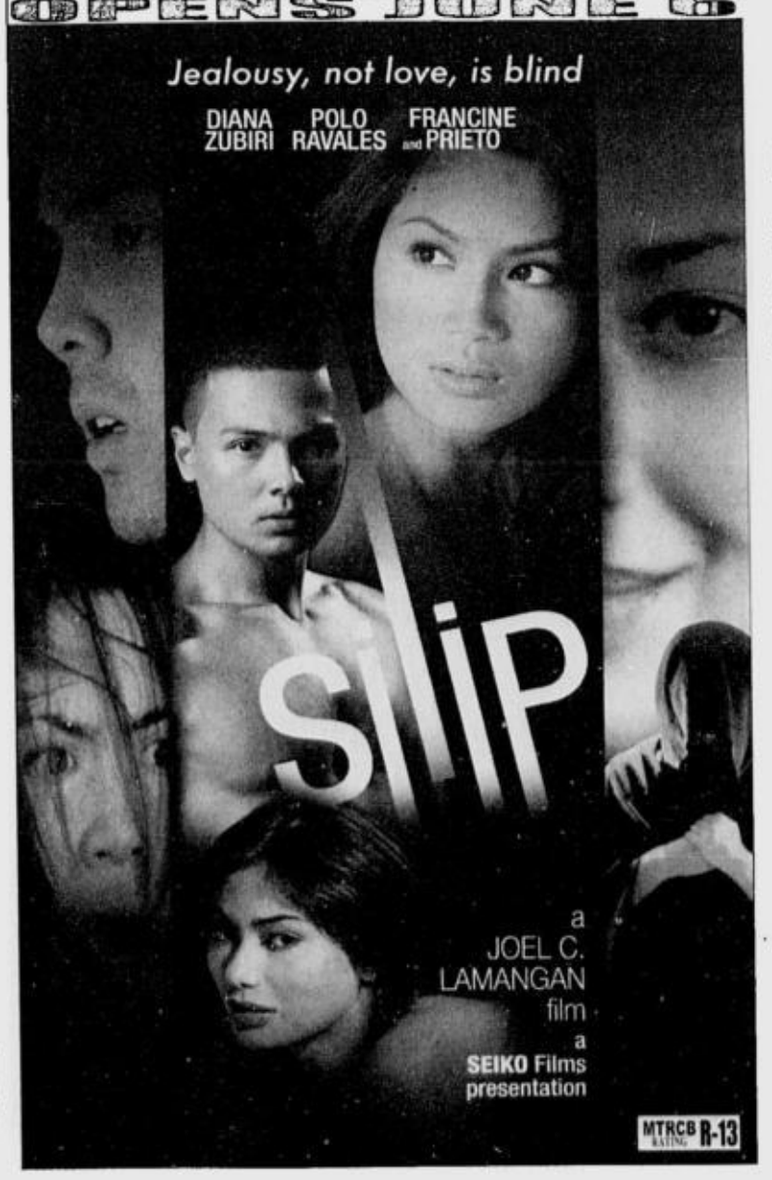

Cinema One nets 5 entries

By Marinel R. Cruz

A DRAMA ON LONGING AND OBESITY, A dark comedy about a filmmaker and a politician, a film tackling homosexual issues, a terrifying story of a carpenter in a haunted mansion, and two brothers' struggle with "deprivation" are the focus of this year's Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival.

Five digital films were chosen from among 130 entries that carried the theme "Ang Kuwento ng Pinoy sa Buong Mundo." The selection was initially cut down to 22 semi-finalists, which went through several screenings.

Lawrence Fajardo's "Sa Ikawalo" is about an OFW rarely seeing his daughter, and a child battling with anorexia and obesity. Fajardo participated in last year's competition with his "Raket ni Nanay."

"Confessional," a collaborative effort of commercial director Ruel Antipuesto and musical composer Jerrold Tarog ("Kubrador," "Masahista"), tells of the experiences of a small-time filmmaker who witnesses a life-changing confession from a retired politician.

"Maling Akala" is a romantic comedy on homosexual issues by Veronica Velasco and Pablo Biglang-awa, who also teamed up to create last year's "Inang Yaya" featuring Maricel Soriano.

Rico Maria Ilarde's "Altar" is a horrifying adventure of a retired boxer working

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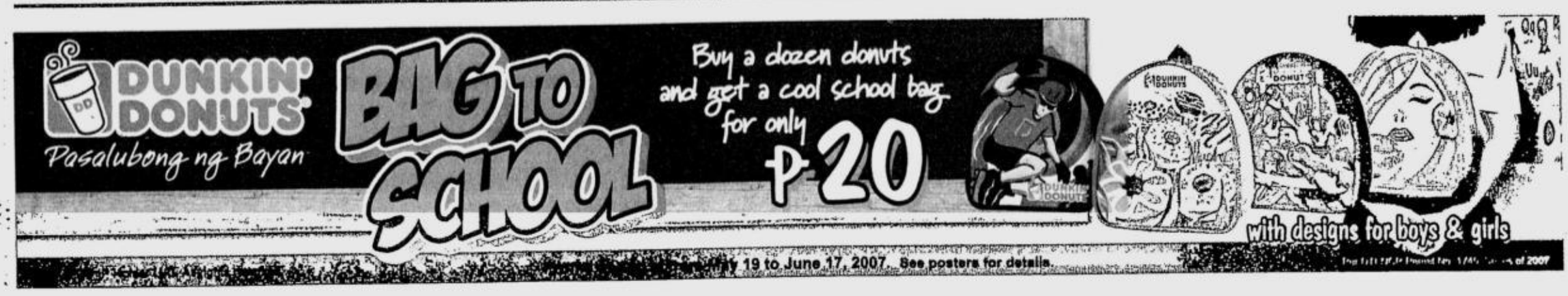


MARK MEILY

Mark Meily names 'new Dolphy'

Award-winning director's pick for update on Brocka classic is ... Michael V

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

DAUNTING, IS HOW AWARD-winning director Mark Meily describes his latest project, an update on the Lino Brocka classic, "Ang Tatay Kong Nanay." After all, the 1978 movie by the world-famous Filipino filmmaker top-billed Comedy King Dolphy and Niño Muhlach, the child superstar at the time.

The landmark film was memorable to Meily.

He recounts: "I watched it at the Luneta Theater when I was 11. It was my first exposure to Brocka. I was too young to appreciate [his] 'Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag' or 'Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang.' I will never forget how Lino treated the separation scene between Dolphy and Niño. You had to be dead not to cry."

MICHAEL V

Same concept

Now that he is a filmmaker himself, Meily is fascinated with "the idea that 'Tatay' was sold as a comedy when, in fact, it was a heart-warming drama." His two previous works—"Crying Ladies" and "La Visa Loca"—followed that very concept as family dramas with equal servings of humor and pathos.

Meily scripted the "Tatay" update, which he entitled "Mommy Ko Si Daddy." Like "Ladies" and "Loca," "Daddy" will be produced by Unitel Pictures.

"Rather than remake a classic, we are using the same premise and applying it to a contemporary situation," he explains. "The common thread is the story of a gay man taking care of a child, whom he grows to really love."

Changes

But Meily has turned the Niño character into a girl, who is also the gay man's biological child. "I have met children of openly gay parents. There is no more effort to hide [the parents'] sexuality."

Meily asserts that his movie's theme is "parenthood ... that gender is not what defines good parenting .. that being single or married is also a non-issue." Of course, he adds, having two parents is ideal, "but that doesn't automatically guarantee effective parenthood."

Real people

Meily takes extra care not to present stereotypical, one-dimensional characters, gay or straight.

"The characters are based on real people," he points out. "The gay hero is someone you know. He has a career and a healthy love life. He's the modern gay. He doesn't get insulted or beaten up for being gay. He knows his rights and his role in society."

Meily has turned the Dolphy character from a *parlorista* (salon makeup artist) into a department store employee. But, like in the original, "I want to show a more human side to a gay character."

Meily and Unitel have tapped child star Erika Oreta (of "Inang Yaya") for the daughter character, but the bigger question seems to be: Who is taking over the Dolphy role?

No-brainer

For Meily, it's a no-brainer.

"Michael V is the Dolphy of our generation in terms of wit, intellect and timing," he says. "Interestingly, Michael wrote an almost exact story line like mine in 2004, except for the ending and a few details. So when he read the story line, he got very excited."

The other crucial question is: How can a heterosexual family man like Meily make a gay character believable?

"It wasn't difficult," Meily insists. "I have a lot of gay friends, I work with them. They've invited me to their gimmicks and made me an honorary gay. Most of my kids' godparents are gay. Lee's (his wife, a cinematographer) term of endearment for me is *vacla*!"

He adds: "Of course, I can never completely acquire the psyche of a gay man," he admits. "But as French actor Gerard Depardieu once said, 'We are all gay, we just don't know it!'"

Timmy writes her 'masterpiece'

"IN YOUR EYES, I REMEMBER who I am," Timmy Cruz sings in her new album which she describes as "the masterpiece of my life."

The singer-actress-businesswoman is back in the scene with "UpTimmystic," a collection of love songs ... of a different kind.

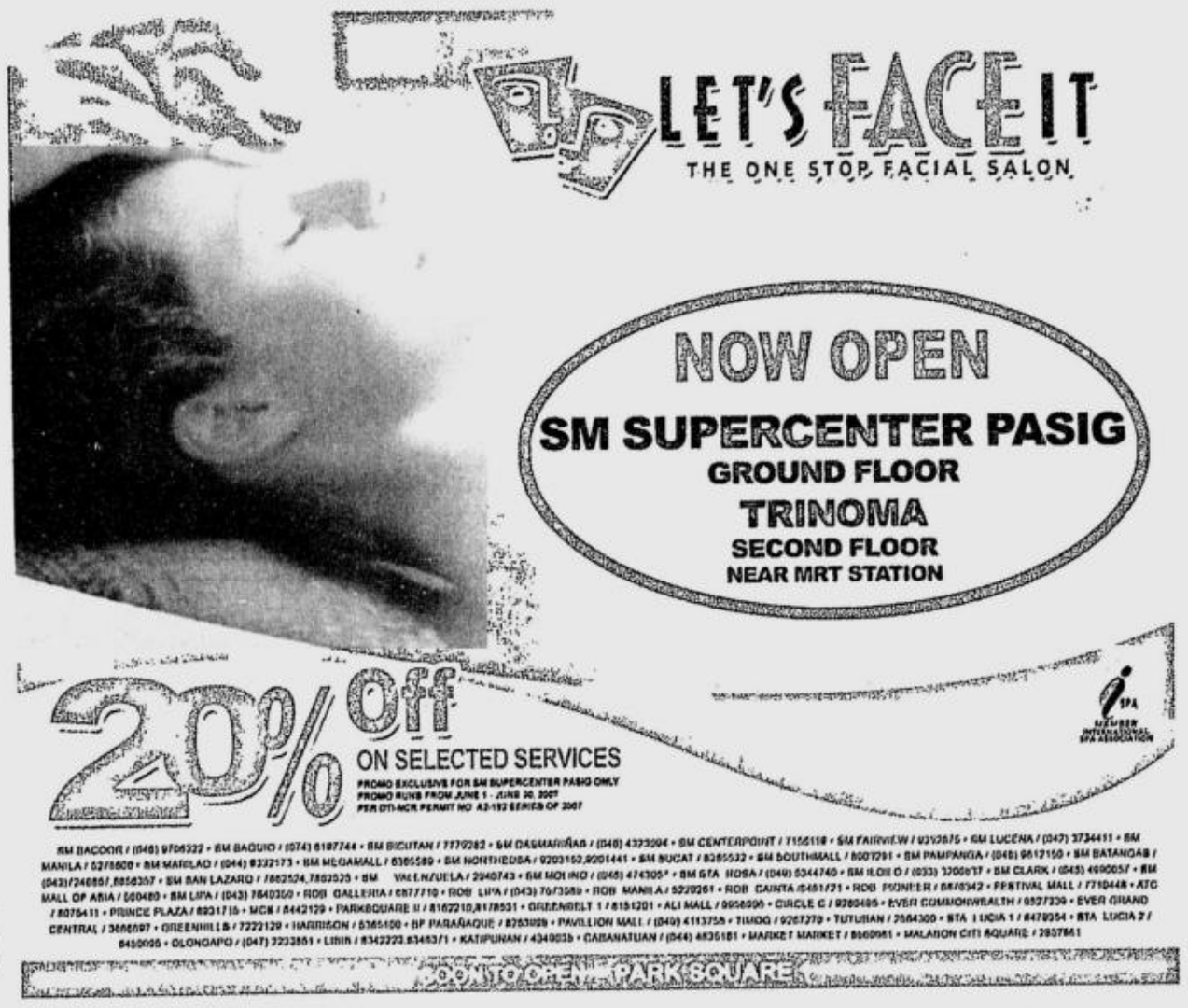
She explains: "It is about love of God, love of the self. It is about soul-consciousness—silencing the mind and choosing to stay happy."

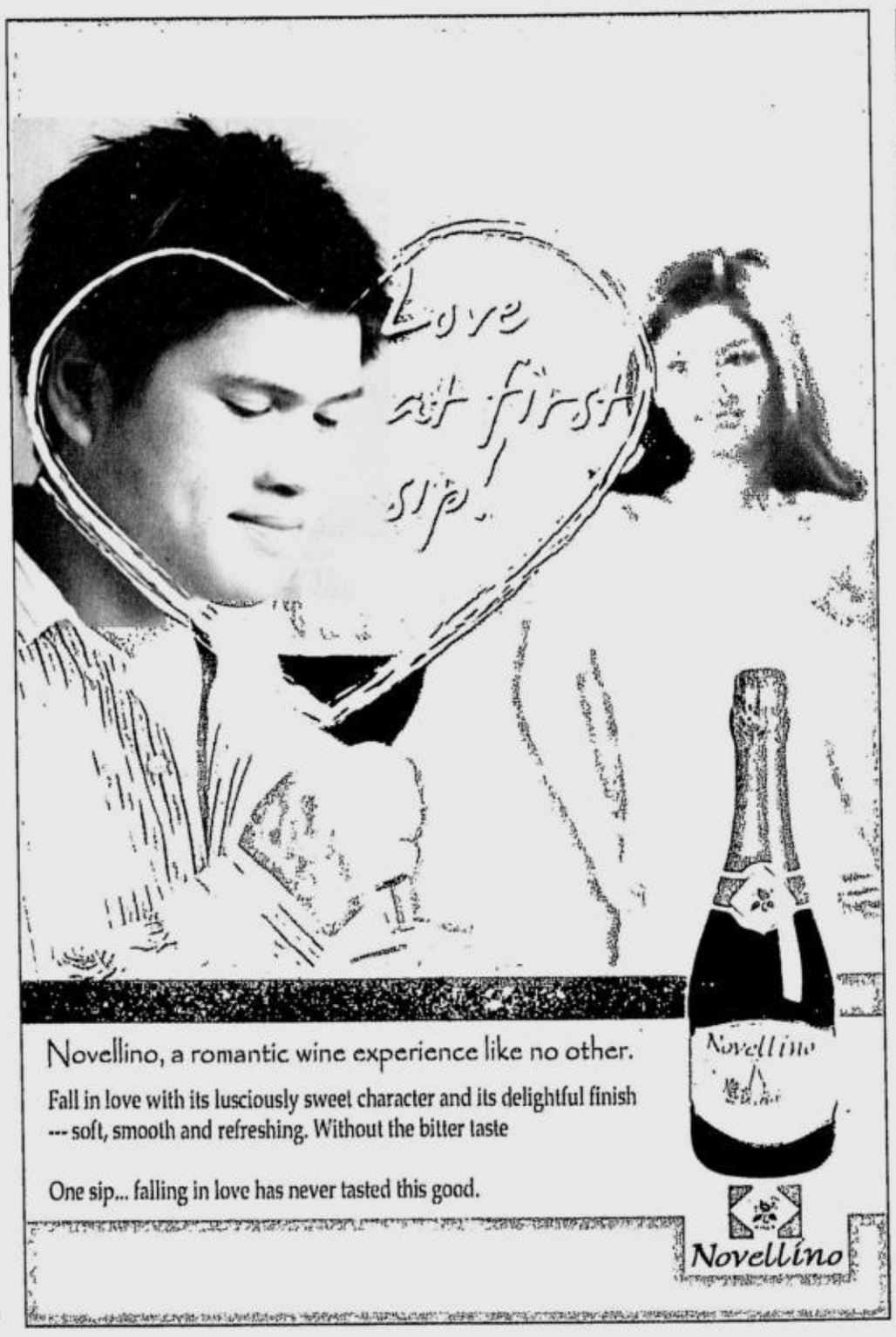
The album, which Timmy recorded in her own Pink Noise Recording Studio, has 16 tracks. She wrote all the lyrics, which her friend and long-time collaborator Ben Escasa set to music.

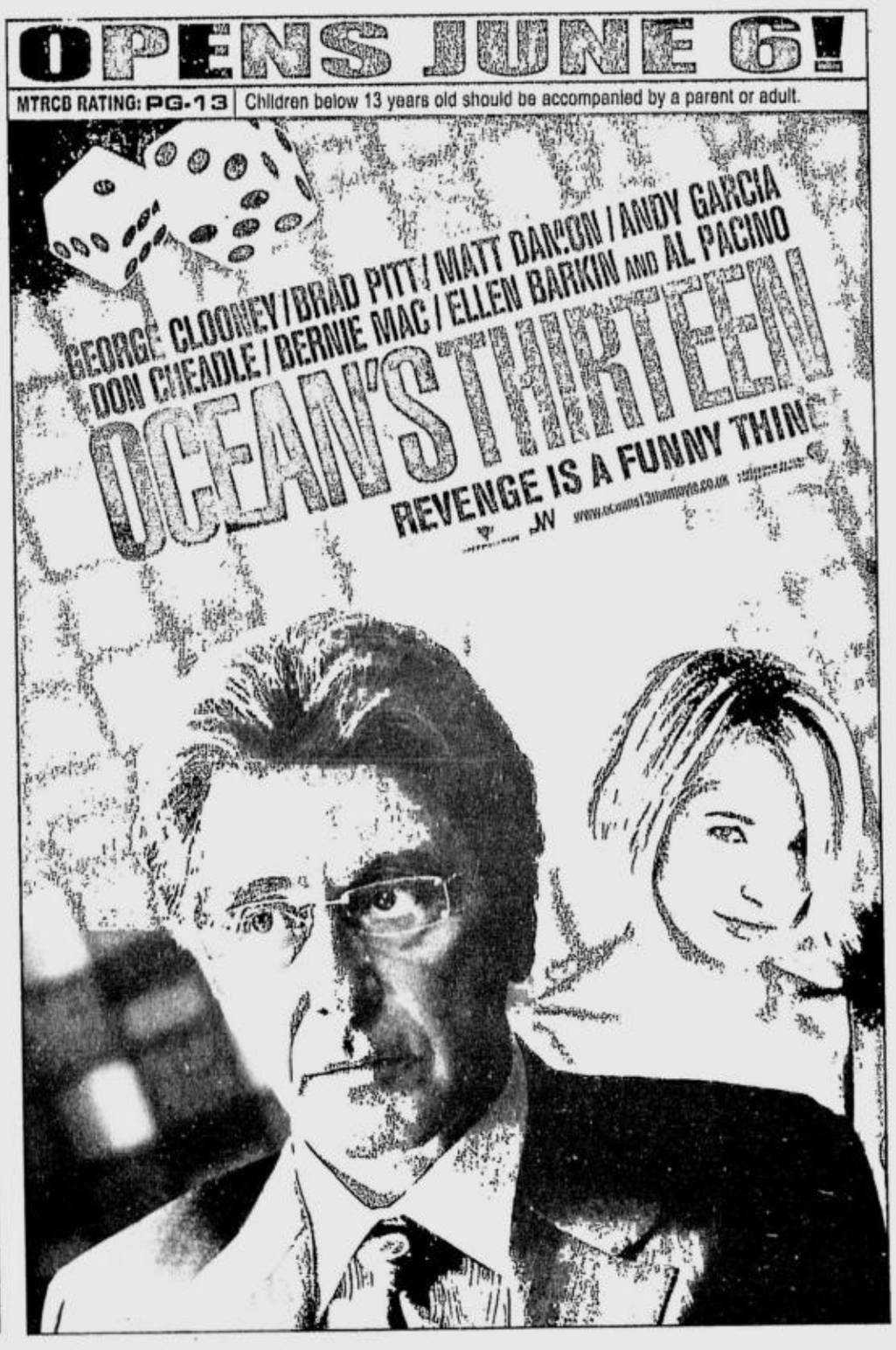
"UpTimmystic" will be launched this week. On June 18, in a concert titled "Time and Transformation" at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City, she will sing three of the songs.

With Tessie Tomas as co-host and Floy Quintos as director, Timmy will host the free concert organized by the Brahma Kumaris to celebrate 25 years of global service.

TIMMY CRUZ







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1 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN 3
3 SHREK 3
4 FIREHOUSE DOG

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3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 3
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4 SHREK 3
12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00
5 SPIDERMAN 3
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Contestant wins game show jackpo

LAST MAY 27 AT 7 P.M., GMA off a new game show, "Tok hosted by **Paolo Bediones**. W to see what it had to offer v we were bowled over when a won a hot million bucks on first telecast.

Way to go—at least as needy contestants are c And it sure made for a big bountiful launch for the gram.

But, what if more contestants also become millionaires in the next few telecasts? That could result in a big fiscal problem that could test the new show's resolve to be extravagantly generous. And, what'll it c core?

VIEWF

Nestor

While the first telecast's ed bonanza gave the new an early boost, the show number of wrinkles and gl should be quickly ironed show's prospects to improv

First, its celebrity playe too strong for effect. It's O stars to be perky and idi but some of the celebritie the contestants' co-playe show's first telecast came abrasive and "TH."

They called too much a themselves and shifted the cus away from the c where it properly belonged

Worse, some celebrity razzed the contestants for with wrong answers, whic ed them from progressing competition. Celebrity should be reminded th there for the *contestants*, n er way around.

Another glitch is the sh sexy dancers to push up its ergy and appeal.

This is a knee-jerk view on local TV, but isn't app "Tok, Tok, Tok," because i at 7 p.m., which is famil overt sexiness isn't called t

Also, note that all thr tants were needy women gests that the show is ai tract a female viewership rating dancers don't fact female and family objectiv

Poor Paolo

Besides, truth to tell, t are giddy and silly, and matic gyrations have be cliches on TV. Can't our people think of more or creative ways to attract vi

Third, the show makes experienced game maste diones. He's restricted to p hosting and quizmaster r down after seeing him i namic modes in his previo

On the plus side, some show's challenges are yu esting, and there's a certa pleasure in seeing guest given a tough time so th man" co-players can prizes.

The contestants them well-chosen because they in need of a bonanza in th their desire to win is grea greatly empathetic.

So, we can see "Tok, eventually coming into it fun game show with loads offer.

But before that, it shou needs to be adjusted: Gh celebrity guests, radically

Tama movie

TOKYO—JAPAN'S TAMA are set for a new life as m ed film about their exploi

The egg-shaped Tamag life of a real pet so that " feed it and clean up afte popular after its 1997 Bandai Co, now called Bandai Holdings Inc.

More than 40 million u sold globally, with the lease of the Tamagotchi sion introduced by Band ond wave of demand.

In the movie, set to con of the Tamagotchi charac who shows up at their ho

"The Tamagotchi cha in their own right, and nice for people to see moving and acting spokeswoman said.

The movie will be distr

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ENTERTAINMENT

t:bonanza

·7 KICKED Tok, Tok," Ve turned in ewers, and contestant the show's

far as the oncerned. bright and new pro-

FINDER

I. Torre

for an en-

unexpect- production tself has a itches that out for the e.

's come on K for guest syncratic, who were rs in the off as too

tention to show's fo- ontestants, co-players coming up h prevent- well in the co-players at they're ot the oth-

w's use of visual en-

ring boost opriate to t's telecast y time, so or. ee contes- This sug- ning to at- so the gy- r into the es..

e dancers heir auto- ome such television iginal and wers? poor use of Paolo Be- erfunctory les—a let- more dy- s shows. f the game kily inter- n perverse tars being eir "every- win - more

selves are're frankly eir lives so , and thus

Tok," Tok" own as a of prizes to

d fix what ose better tone down

the dancing dervishes and give Paolo more interesting things to do to sustain his regulation as one of local TV's most dynamic hosts.

'Minutes to Midnight'

Linkin Park's new CD, "Minutes to Midnight," debuted at No. 1 in all Music One branches. It's also lording it over the music charts in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore and Korea. The new album is described as a breakthrough for the band. Producer Rick Rubin observes, "It doesn't sound like rap-rock, there's strong songwriting—it's very melodic!"

'Your love'

There's a new version of **Alamid**'s hit song, "Your Love," an acoustic version that the band performs with empathetic passion. It's part of a compilation album, "Rock Grooves in Delirious Ways." Other tracks are performed by **Moonstar 88, Popfilter, Audiolokal, Kartoon Chemistry** and other edgy groups.

'Matira Matibay'

The best-loved songs of **Parokya ni Edgar** have been complied in "Matira Matibay," which has been released in three formats—CD, VCD and DVD. There are 19 songs, including "Manilwala Ka Sana," "Picha Pie," "Mr. Suave," "First Day Funk," "Bagsakan," "Gitara," "Sorry Na" and "Harana."

Feedback

From Rowena R. Paguia of Makati City: "Young viewers should be treated as the vulnerable, impressionable children they are.

"They should not be bombarded with disturbing images like scantily-clad dancers gyrating on noontime TV shows, single mothers boasting about their pregnancy, stars dismissing marriage as 'just a piece of paper,' and *teleseryes* full of violent action, revenge, evil plots and physical and psychological torture.

"Production executives and staffers should be reminded that television is a 'For General Patronage' medium, because children are watching most of the time. So, great care should be taken to telecast images and air dialogue that they are equipped to handle."

gotchi debut

GOTCHI VIRTUAL PETS ovie stars, with an animat- to debut later this year. otchi, which simulates the owners" have to it, was wildly release by Namco

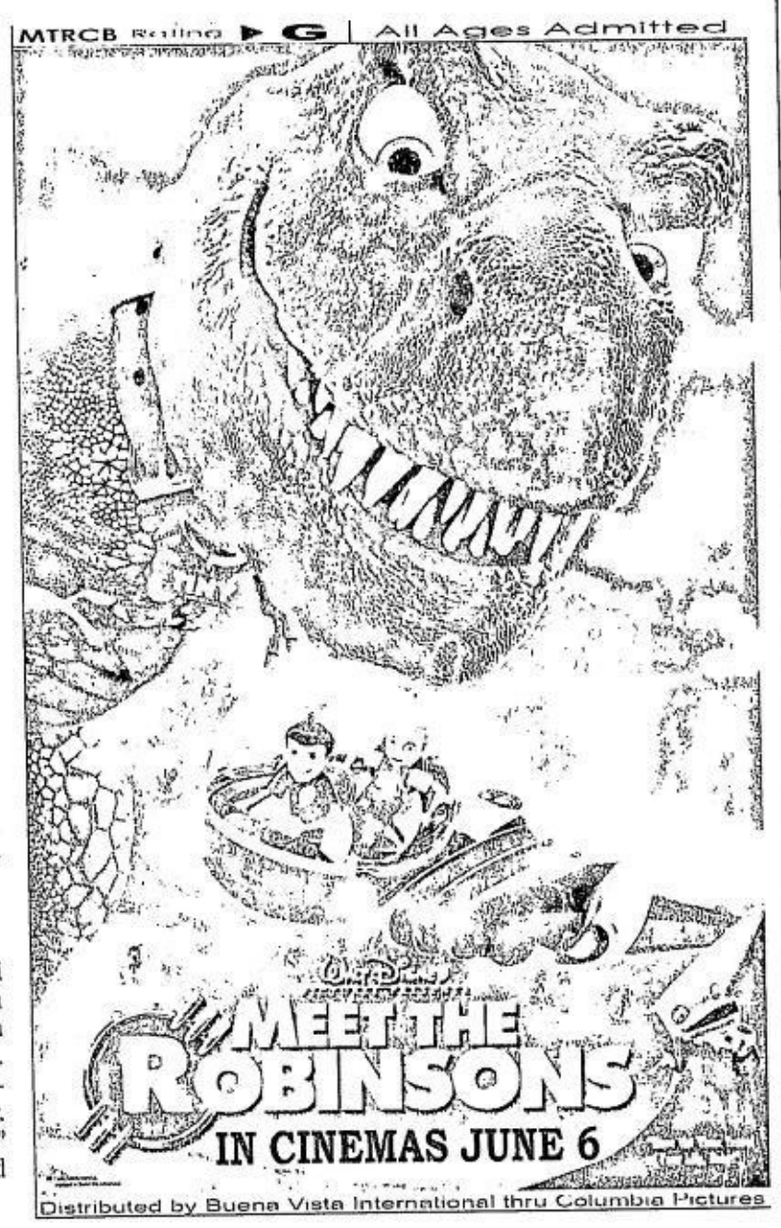
CHEER FACTOR

nits were 004 re- lus ver- i America sparking a sec-

e out in December, several ters befriend a human girl ne on a star. acters are pretty popular we thought it would be their favorite characters in colour," a Bandai

buted by Toho Co.

Reuters



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2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9.50
3 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 12.00 3:10 6:20 9:30
4 ZODIAC 12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00
5 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
6 FRACTURE 12:20 2:40 5:00
7 WHISPER 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
8 indieSine: METLOGS 1:30 3:20 5:10 8.50
9 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:15 4:05 6:55 9:45
10 SHREK 3 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

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WHISPER 5:30 7:45 10:00
3 SHREK 3 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
4 ZODIAC 12:45 3:50 6:55 10:00
5 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
6 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 11:15 2:50 6:25 10:00

METRO EAST

1 SHREK 3 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
2 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? 1:15 3.50 6:25
3 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN? 10:45 1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00
4 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00
5 FRACTURE 12:30 2:45
WHISPER 5:10 7:00 9:00
6 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 2:40 5:50
7 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00
8 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

NOVALICHES

1 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
2 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
5 SHREK 3
6 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

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1 PIRATES of the CARIBBEAN 3 1:40 5.05 8:30
2 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY 12:10 2:20 4:30 6:40 8:40
3 SHREK 3 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40
4 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

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3 SHREK 3
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5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN?

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5 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
6 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-3
7 MR. BEAN'S HOLIDAY
8 PAANO KITA IIBIGIN
9 SPIDER-MAN-3
10 SHREK THE THIRD

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